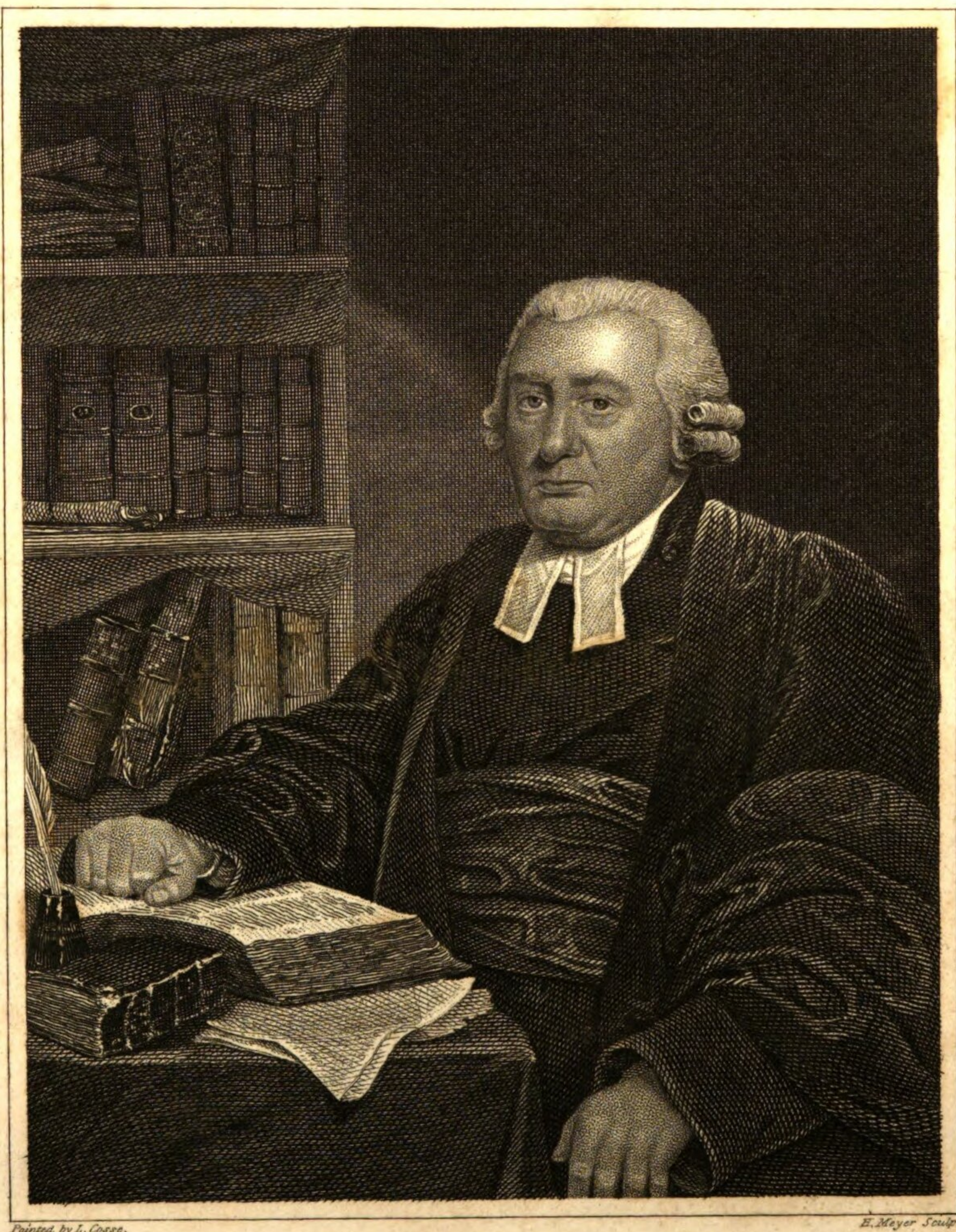


Epist. 818^m

Scott

LETTERS.

L. B. SEELEY, WESTON-GREEN, THAMES-DITTON.



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REV. THOMAS SCOTT.
Rector of Aston Sandford,
from the Original Picture.

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LETTERS AND PAPERS

OF THE LATE

REV. THOMAS SCOTT;

WITH OCCASIONAL OBSERVATIONS,

BY JOHN SCOTT, A. M.

VICAR OF NORTH FERRIBY, AND MINISTER OF
ST. MARY'S, HULL.

SECOND EDITION.

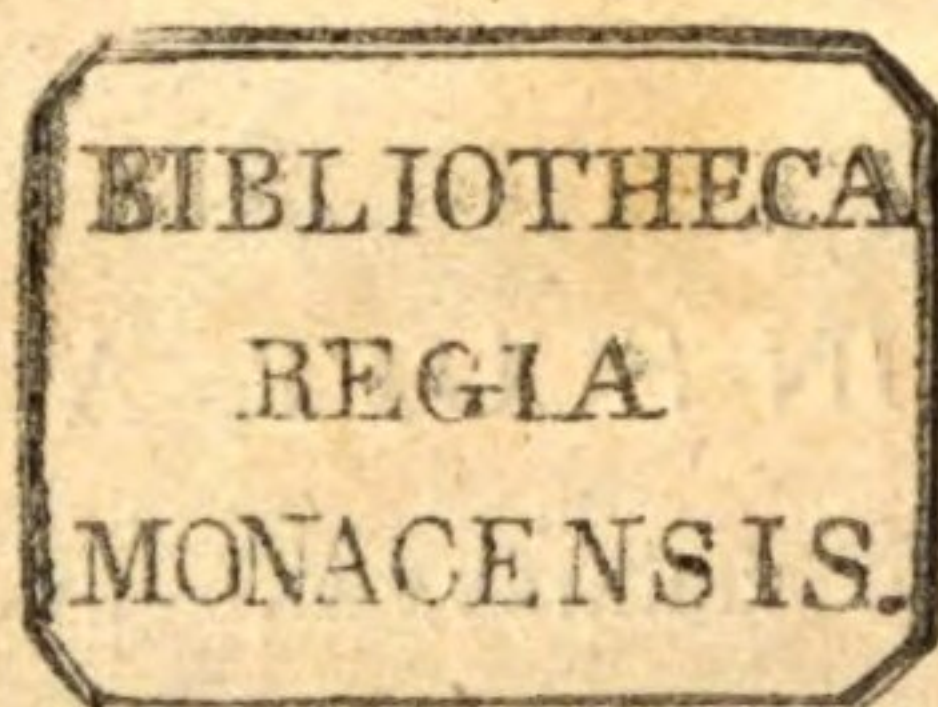
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MDCCCXXVI.

THEATERS AND LIBRARIES

REV. THOMAS SCOTT

WITH OCCASIONAL CASES



PRINTED FOR J. B. BERRY AND SON

11, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, LONDON.

MDCCLXXI

PREFACE.

IN presenting this volume to the public, I cannot but acknowledge, with lively gratitude, the manner in which the account that I was enabled to give of the Author's life has been received. This has been such as to inspire the hope that that work may prove extensively useful, both directly in itself, and indirectly by exciting a fresh, and, in many instances, a more unprejudiced attention to his numerous writings.

At the same time I am sensible that the success of my former volume may not unnaturally produce some feelings of distrust with regard to the present. An apprehension may arise, that I have been induced to collect and print, without sufficient discrimination, whatever had fallen from the pen of one to whom the religious public has shown so marked a regard. Such an apprehension, if it exist, can be removed only by the work itself. I feel, however, a considerable degree of confidence, that the present publication will be not only excused but approved. I do not take upon me to affirm that every letter and every

paper, here printed, might, when taken alone, have merited such a distinction ; but I do trust that, viewed altogether, the contents of the volume will be found both interesting and useful, and in many parts highly valuable.

In the arrangement of the letters I have had respect to two points : 1. Preserving the series of communications to each correspondent unbroken ; and, 2. Observing the order of time. It is obvious that some sacrifice of one of these objects to the other would occasionally be unavoidable : but they have both been secured as far as was practicable. In one instance only the letters to the same person have been divided into two series, that the course of events might not be unduly anticipated.

In some cases, not many in number, I have thought it needful or expedient to supply a few words, which were either implied, though not expressed, by the writer, or which seemed requisite more fully to bring out his meaning. Where these at all affect the sense they are inclosed in brackets.

Many persons having expressed a wish for a reduced copy of the larger and more finished portrait which had been published of the Author, that wish has here been complied with.

Before I close these prefatory remarks I would advert to a subject of somewhat greater importance. I am aware of one and only one use, or

rather perversion, which has been made of my Father's Life, that gives me any concern. It has been adduced, by writers not very correct, indeed, or careful in what they advance, as furnishing proof positive of the immoral tendency of evangelical or Calvinistic doctrines, (for the terms seem now to be used promiscuously,) and of the antinomian character, generally, of those who are called professors of evangelical religion. "We have here," it has been said, "the testimony of the greatest saint in their calendar against themselves." And it may be the more proper briefly to notice the subject in this place, because the present work may perhaps be considered as adding to that testimony.

That my Father was of opinion that much antinomian practice, in a sense which was with some care explained in his Life,¹ and many sentiments tending to antinomianism, were found among the evangelical body, is readily admitted and openly avowed. But, to avail for the purpose desired, this charge, thus professedly brought on his authority, ought to mean, that this description of persons is *more* antinomian than other classes of professed Christians; and in fact that their antinomianism arises from the legitimate use, and not from the abuse, of what are called evangelical doctrines, properly stated. But neither

¹ See pp. 205, 667, 668. (210, 685.)

of these positions is supported by his evidence. That the latter of them is directly contrary to the truth, it was the employment of his life to demonstrate. And that the former was by no means his intention was sufficiently pointed out in the *Life* itself, for the satisfaction of the candid and careful reader. "His complaint," it was there expressly observed, "was not that persons embracing these doctrines were *worse* than others, but that many of them were found by no means *so much better* than others, as he was convinced their principles ought to have made them."¹

In short it may be justly said that he had respect to the rule implied in the interrogatories of the Apostle, *What have I to do to judge them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?* He spoke openly and honestly of the faults of those with whom he was more immediately connected, in Christian charity seeking their improvement: and in this particular view he concerned not himself with others. If therefore we would ascertain the comparative character of that class of persons, and the tendency and effect of their principles upon the whole, according to *his* judgment, we should inquire, in connexion with what he has written concerning them, How would such a man—one of so high and holy views, and of such keen discernment of error—

¹ *Life*, p. 204. (210.)

of its causes and its consequences—have spoken, had he been called to report on the state of the *anti*-evangelical world?—that part of it, I especially mean, which brings such charges as we are considering. And I cannot hesitate to answer, that he would have said, “*Ye* have utterly *taken away the key of knowledge*—of the just knowledge of God’s holiness—of man’s real condition—and of what is required of him. *Ye* have *made the law of God of none effect* through your relaxed interpretations. *Ye* have removed the true standard of duty, and substituted for it an infinitely lower and looser rule. *Ye* are to be numbered therefore among the abettors of the most widespread, though least suspected, of all species of antinomianism.” That these would have corresponded with his actual sentiments will appear from a few extracts which I shall subjoin, in which he declares what he really thought of the evangelical body as compared with other professed Christians: whereas, in the passages of which advantage has been taken, he was speaking of them as compared with the purity of genuine Christianity in principle and practice.

In a quotation, inserted in the *Life*,¹ from probably the most studied of all his printed sermons, he says, “Perhaps *speculating* antinomians abound most among professed Calvinists, but antinomians

¹ Page 204. (209.)

whose sentiments influence their *practice*, are innumerable among Arminians. Does the reader doubt this? Let him ask any of those multitudes who trample on God's commandments, what they think of "Calvinistic doctrines," and he will find that this is undeniably true: for all these, in various ways, take occasion from the mercy of God to encourage themselves in impenitent wickedness"—which is the very essence of antinomianism.

The following passages are from his answer to the "Refutation of Calvinism."

"In populous places, where in this land preachers of every kind are at present found, there will, no doubt, be men who adopt the wildest notions, and disgrace the truths which they profess, with the vilest conduct. They who pay sufficient attention to the subject will find, that this is the grief and distress of numbers, and especially of ministers, who, agreeing in some points of doctrine with these enthusiasts and antinomians, (for we cannot give up truth, because professed and perverted by wicked men,) are by superficial observers, and such as only behold the company from a distance, classed with the very persons whom they mourn over, and protest against, and oppose by every scriptural method in their power. —But, after every deduction, it may confidently be averred, that the stated congregations, and especially the communicants, at those churches

or chapels in which the evangelical clergy officiate, are by far the most strictly moral part of the established church, in respect of exemption from gross vices ; and, further, that they exert themselves in endeavouring to relieve the distresses of the poor, to instruct their children, and to forward every good work, with more decided diligence, earnestness, and liberality, than are generally manifested among their opponents. And I appeal to every candid observer, who differs from me in religious sentiments, but who has carefully compared our parishes and congregations with other parishes and congregations, whether this be not true and indisputable !”¹

Again : “ What a lamentable thing is it, that in every age there should be great numbers to whom this description² in some sense may be applied ! They assent to the truth of Christianity in general, and to many of its doctrines : they are not infidels ; they have a notional faith, but they are wicked men ; that is, they live in the habitual practice of sin, and neglect of their duty to God and man, and are worldly, ungodly, and selfish, in their whole conduct. There are no doubt many of this description among Calvinists ; but there is at least as large a proportion among Anticalvinists ; and especially among those who oppose the doctrine of justification by faith, and salvation

¹ Page 430 : or Works, vol. vii. p. 547, 548.

² “ The wicked who have faith : *fidelium iniquorum*.” Augustine.

by grace alone. They profess to depend on good works, yet neglect to practise them ; as if the very scarcity of them would enhance their value ! Yet they encourage themselves in this strange inconsistent course of life, by a presumptuous reliance on the mercy of God ; and soothe their consciences by the idea, that, as professed Christians, they shall not be judged by the strict and holy law of God, but by some milder and more pliable rule ! What millions of these antinomian professors of Christianity are there at this day in the visible church.”¹

These, be it observed, are antinomians not upon an *evangelical* foundation.—He shortly after adds, on the words, “ Presume not on the mercy of God to sin ” &c. : “ I may be bold to say, that Great Britain produces no set of men who more decidedly, particularly, and constantly testify against this perversion of the gospel, and every variety of it, by sermons, and publications of various kinds, than the evangelical clergy. It would be easy to prove this by quotations : but the appeal is made to our printed works in general.”

¹ Page 704 : or Works, vol. viii. p. 290.

May 6, 1824.

* * In references to the Life of the Author, the figures enclosed in parentheses, point out the pages of the seventh edition ; the other figures, those of some preceding editions.

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LETTERS AND PAPERS.

I.

EARLY LETTERS.

1773—1776.

THE articles which occur under this number will be found of a different description from any of those which follow. I insert the first letter as a specimen of the writer's correspondence with his sisters, at the period which immediately followed his ordination and removal into Buckinghamshire. The readers of his Life may, perhaps, remember that he states "his ability of writing, and his flow of thought, to have come to him chiefly" in this way—"by corresponding with his sisters on sentimental and other subjects."¹ This specimen will be acknowledged to demonstrate a surprising change since the time when, according to his own account, he was "utterly unable to compose themes, and even greatly at a loss to write a common letter;" "absolutely seeming to have no ideas."² It is replete with good sense, and loaded with thought, of a kind which would not have presented itself to every young man at twenty-six years of age, even though he might

¹ Life, p. 29. (30.)

² Ibid. p. 8.

have enjoyed much superior advantages. It is addressed to his sister, afterwards Mrs. Webster, at Spilsby and treats

ON THE CHOICE OF A HUSBAND.

“MY DEAR SISTER,

“Stoke Goldington,
August 6, 1773.

“I AM now afraid I shall trouble you with long and double letters till you begin to be weary of my correspondence: but the nature of your last requires a speedy answer, as I know from experience that, when any thing of such moment is confided to another, there is an unavoidable anxiety until an answer is received. It gives me much satisfaction to see the mutual confidence that prevails between my sisters all and me; and, as far as any thing I can say or do can be of service, with most unfeigned pleasure shall I set about it. At the same time, in affairs of this nature, though never made much account of myself, I think I have made many useful observations, and in common cases deem myself a tolerable judge: but I must own that your situation has nonplussed me. Besides, you have got to those years, and are of so considerate a disposition; bestow so much pains to examine circumstances, and weigh consequences, and are so well qualified to do it; that I imagine to myself all I can say, and much more, has been ere now weighed and pondered in your mind. But, as you will not be satisfied if I go no further, I will endeavour just to give you a hint or two of my sentiments.

“I am very sorry my brother should make use of such an expression as you mention : it was unworthy of his good sense : it is an indiscriminating method of judging that I shall never adopt. It is the man, not his occupation, that makes the difference. . . . Where is this to stop ? Do we not see bad husbands, and imprudent persons, in infinitum, amongst all ranks of men ? and, on the other hand, do we not find desirable relations, men of sobriety, prudence, and virtue, in every condition ? People of my profession are in general deemed undesirable husbands : but, if I live, I hope to convince one person, be it who it may, that there are exceptions.—You therefore see that I lay but little stress on that hasty objection. So far I allow it weight ; if the person were a *pedant* exciseman, and neither knew nor was capable of learning any thing else, a just objection might be raised : but I think you would not be prejudiced in favour of such a man. If he were imprudent, and had no idea of making provision for a rainy day, exciseman or not, he would be worth no woman’s having. But, if he be, as I am prejudiced to hope, though you are the best judge, a man of docility and prudence, a man of spirit and activity, he will never be at a loss ; but, where one resource fails, he will quickly seize another. How many instances does every day present us of people brought up entirely to a business or profession, who never make any progress : while others, whom fortune alone as it were threw into their way of getting a living, by industry, prudence, and ingenuity, far surpass the others, nay, become eminent ? —Your scheme of grazing I like very well : and,

if the family approved, it might be very advantageous, as a great deal of good business of that kind is in their hands, and each present branch provided for. I have but a very slender acquaintance with the person; you have a more perfect knowledge of him: all I can do is to give you some hints of what I could wish to direct your choice. At the same time I am sensible that I shall give you no information, as your sentiments are so similar to my own. But still I will give those hints.

“Let then *sobriety* be a *sine qua non*: with it many deficiencies may be supplied; without it many excellencies may not only be buried, but rendered prejudicial. Prefer sobriety to almost every consideration: for a drunkard, nay a person only a little addicted to drinking, can never render you happy.

“Next, let every *virtue* be examined in order, and let the lowest in rank of these be preferred to the highest personal endowment or agreeable quality. Never seek for those qualities which the most of your sex admire: they are indifferent in themselves, but, by the favour they acquire, they inspire vanity, and render a man haughty, imperious, and self-sufficient: which I think next to drunkenness is most to be avoided.

“Let an *obliging* disposition be much regarded. I do not mean the temper which is in general called by this name, and which consists in affected complaisance and unmeaning officiousness—under which is commonly concealed the most insufferable pride; but that disposition which, without ostentation, finds pleasure in giving pleasure;

thinks the opportunity of doing a good office a sufficient reward for the trouble attending it; and is never so happy as when employed in doing good.

“You see how little stress I lay upon the qualifications of body or mind, which carry to the generality of each sex the most bewitching attractions. I have learned to regulate my own conduct by other rules, and to aim at other attainments; and perhaps, both in myself and others, I make too little account of those admired qualities. In short I lay no stress at all upon them, but rather the contrary: and, were I to marry a woman at a short warning, I would rather choose one of whom no one took any notice, than one who was the admiration of every body.—But *good sense*, I own, has great attractions for me, and I think for you also: but a very great mistake is often committed in that particular. You remark I put the epithet *good* to it; that will form a hint what I mean; namely, a tolerable share of sense applied to its proper use. I have often been in company with people of noted sense, who have been the most insufferable creatures living. A certain air of superiority infects their whole conduct: a positiveness in assertion, an impatience of contradiction, a peremptory tone, a deciding vote, are their characteristics. These you would avoid as a pestilence. A person much inferior in parts and education may far surpass them in good sense. You may be able to converse with one inferior in knowledge, with tolerable satisfaction; but you never can with him who thinks himself superior in so absolute a manner as not to allow you to know

any thing. A real ignorance and an imagined knowledge often have the same effects, that is, produce obstinacy, which is the bane of every thing good and desirable. Let the person then you choose, in this particular, possess useful knowledge; but, whether he knows more or less, let him never think he knows enough; if he does, woe to his wife—except she know nothing.—In my judgment, nothing can render a man more desirable than a certain diffidence of himself; a feeling that he is liable to mistake, and that his knowledge, how extensive soever, may receive additions. Such a person will ever listen to reasons given; and will never quarrel with one who happens to think otherwise than he does: and you know how desirable such a quality is.

“In regard to external *circumstances*, a prudent foresight is necessary in every rank of life: though riches are not happiness, poverty is distress, especially to those who have not been used to it. Here look out for frugality, industry, application, and activity. Whatever station a man is born in, on himself in a great measure depends his future fortune; and though it may not be practicable for a man to raise himself from indigence to affluence, yet it is hardly ever out of a man's power, who possesses the qualities I have mentioned, to advance himself to a comfortable independence: while, on the other hand, no advantages of fortune secure the imprudent prodigal from sinking into poverty and distress.

“So you see, upon the whole, I prefer sobriety to every thing; virtue to the gifts of nature; that man whom others think beneath notice, to him

whom each female views and admires ; an innate benevolence to an outside complaisance ; a small share of useful, well applied good sense, to the largest fund of learning and knowledge, when productive of self-sufficiency ; modesty, even in a man, to the most agreeable assurance ; and, lastly, frugality and prudence to riches and worldly advantages : and from all together you may infer that it is the man himself, not his externals, nor yet his calling, that I judge by. You best know how many of those qualities the person in question possesses, and in which he is deficient ; but, as you must expect deficiencies in every one, let it rather be in any thing than that I first mentioned : and next avoid the peremptory sensible man.

“ So far I have given my sentiments on this so delicate a subject in a general manner. As to descending to particulars, it is impossible. When I am well acquainted with the men, I durst positively say, Avoid this man ; but I durst not say, Choose this : because men are not absolutely to be known ; and, as my design in every action is to do good, so I should never forgive myself, if by my advice any person, and especially a sister, were induced to take a step which entailed misery.

“ One thing more I have to add, that, next to your own inclinations, I had almost said, prior to them, the sentiments of the person in question ought to be consulted. Oblige a man of sense and sensibility in marrying him, and you lay a most excellent foundation : turn the obligation the other way, and your man must be well chosen indeed to act in a desirable manner. But, where the

obligation is nearly equal, the most promising and stable foundation is laid. In short, the nearer the equality in each particular is, the better the prospect of future happiness.

“So far you see my sentiments: but one most material thing remains yet to be considered, which requires a still more delicate touch. You say something of my father’s not giving his consent. And have I been all along advising you to act in contradiction to the opinion of one so superior in age and experience, and who, beyond dispute, has your interest as much at heart as any one, not even excepting myself? In what I have said I did not intend that. If my father any way opposes it, I am sensible he does it because he thinks the prospect not good; which if it really be not, it ought to be prevented. Convince my father therefore that the person is not undeserving, and you are sure of his consent. You have great influence with him, and he has a very great opinion of your judgment and prudence; he will hear your reasons with partiality; and time alters people’s opinion much. But I lay more stress on his consent than on my brother’s censure; though I have a very high opinion of him also: but that deciding manner is his fault: and perhaps my father’s judgment has thence received a bias.”

The great stress which this letter lays upon freedom from intemperance will have been noticed; nor can the supreme importance of such a qualification be doubted: but we may take occasion to remark, that many passages in my father’s early letters imply that the vice of drunkenness was

much more common at that time, than, it is to be hoped, it is at present. "Getting drunk," he on one occasion says,—“a vice with which I think the whole world is infected.”

What he in another point requires that the object of his sister's choice should be, *that* he himself eminently was—“a man of spirit and activity, who, where one resource fails, will quickly seize another.” He says of himself, and most justly, to his younger sister, (afterwards Mrs. Ford,) November 10, of the same year: “If I know my own character, *whatever my hand findeth to do, I do it with all my might.* In each action I endeavour to take in its whole future tendency. Now that I think study the important point, with application I pursue it. Should a family require a further supply, either for present use or future provision, if I know myself, I should apply to some other more immediate source of advantage, with equal spirit and assiduity. This I think my past conduct proves: for nothing can be more opposite than my former and my present pursuits; and no one can say that I wanted spirit in either.”

I shall subjoin a few miscellaneous extracts from his early correspondence with his sisters.

In a letter dated London, March 13, 1773, the day before he was ordained priest, he writes thus. “London is just what it was, a place of noise, confusion, and grandeur; not of happiness. I walk the streets in a very philosophical manner: some I pity, some I detest, some despise, and at some I am amazed; but I think I envy no one. At one end of the town men are all pursuing interest,

some with prudence and honesty, some with knavery.

‘Through different roads with equal speed they run,
Some to undo, and some to be undone.’

At the other end, nothing but grandeur and show, dissipation and diversion. Mankind in general are more desirous of *appearing* happy than of *being* so : else what satisfaction can there be in flying from reflection, and supplying the want of peace and wisdom by an incessant round of folly ? what gratification can they propose to themselves, who, by anticipating their desires and appetites, have lost all relish of the enjoyments they pursue ? But we may preach long ere we can alter the ways of thinking, how erroneous soever they may be. Mankind will pursue pleasure, and never overtake it ; follow after happiness, and in reality leave it. We cannot help it. We must only reform our own judgments and manners, and those of such as we have authority over. How much has everyone to thank God and his parents for, who had his mind seasoned in his youth with rational notions, and has been taught to seek that happiness which consists, not in unbounded gratification, but in a rational restraint of his passions. Such an education is not only more valuable than a large inheritance, titles, or possessions, but even than the greatest abilities, natural or acquired.”

1773.—“How well an &c. fills up a chasm in the mind, and answers the purpose, not only of a word, but of a thought. It resembles a man getting the character of wisdom by holding his tongue.”

1773.—“As the greatest part of my life has

been spent differently from what I judged for my advantage, and yet has all combined, and each part tended thereto, I will act to the best of my knowledge, and according to the dictates of honour, and make no doubt that this also will help forward the same end." "The seeming shipwrecks we meet with in the voyage of life often prove the very things which best speed our course to *the haven where we would be*. In this conflict (the struggles of life,) naught but yielding loses the victory."

Let the sincere Christian realize the closing sentiment, as eminently and universally true in the great conflict in which he is engaged; and be animated by it, as in all reason he ought, to be "steadfast and unmoveable." "Only by yielding can he lose the victory."

1775.—"The wisdom and duty of every person are, to do his best towards making things go as he thinks would be for his good: but, if they will take a different turn, then to rest assured, that even so it is for the best; since every thing, great or small, is ordered by the providence of that God who knows much better what is for our good than we do, and is often disposing things for our advantage when we are murmuring, and repining in discontent, at the very methods his infinite wisdom makes choice of; because we perceive not their tendency, nor discern their propriety."

This was written in the crisis of his great conflict concerning subscription, and the resignation of the hopes of preferment.¹

¹ Life, p. 82—97. (83—99.)

1773.—“Your notions of predestination are very just ; and think not that I flatter when I say, that I have read a volume on the subject more than once, in which so much has not been said. The sole difficulty is, how the Almighty can foresee, and not constrain : and an inextricable difficulty it is. But can we see by what means he causes a seed to grow into a plant ? The truth is, we are finite, and He is infinite : our conceptions are confined to narrow limits. He spans immensity : and shall we wonder that our narrow faculties cannot contain or comprehend his unsearchable counsels ? Would not the motions of a watch, and the watchmaker’s foretelling how it would go, be as inextricably mysterious to the ignorant savage, as infinite wisdom perfectly foreseeing the various motions of the heart, influenced by given reason and passions, revelation and grace ?”

The last illustration, though happy as far as it goes, does not, it must be confessed, reach the peculiarities of the case—and perhaps was not meant to do so. The watchmaker “constrains” what he “foresees.”

1774.—“A serious mind, say others what they may, is not only the soil of virtue, but the seed of happiness : and he knows but little of the human heart, who confounds seriousness with dulness, or levity with cheerfulness. Rather put seriousness and cheerfulness into one character, and their opposites into the other.”

1774.—“By being placed among sectaries, I have been led to inquire into their different principles ; and the character I am emulous of is that of a moderator ; explaining the doctrines I

profess, in such a manner as to come as near as truth will allow to those who differ from me, and their's so as to come as near to my own as they admit. I think I have, by a strict examination, cleared my own ideas much, and I have certainly fixed the notions of some who were wavering. These doctrines (denominated *methodistical*) here reign triumphant. Few are to be found who are not rather biased that way, except those who are utterly negligent. The reason is, the methodistical ministers are so exemplary in their lives, and so diligent in their calling; and the others (may silence cover it!) so remiss and careless, not to say immoral; and most so little desirous of rectifying others' notions, that few have any thing tolerably formed of their own. These are the real causes. *Your* methodistical teachers are men of no parts, and not sufficiently respectable: *our's* of showy talents and (for we must judge by appearances, and on the charitable side,) of respectable characters. These arguments, supported by a showy rhetoric, and a diligence unknown to others, are sufficient to cast the scale on that side. And, alas! their opponents do not desire to draw it back. They affect to despise them and their adherents, and avow an indifference: but they are not to be despised." "The person I board with is a nominal protestant, and a real catholic. I think I shall make a real protestant of him."

1774.—"It would give me some pleasure if people would but let me alone; but my choice in life is so widely different from that of many of my brethren, that they think they are doing a

meritorious act in endeavouring, as they suppose, to rectify my ideas. They are sure I study too hard; and are troublesomely anxious about my health. They want me to eat better, and drink better, to go into more company, to sit up later, and lie in bed longer: and all this for my health's sake, together with a wise regard to future life. But I am so conceited as to think myself the wisest; the best judge of my constitution and interest. You can hardly conceive the resolution that I have occasion for, to enable me to stay at home, and act as my judgment dictates. I am certain I might, if I chose, spend my whole time in visits. But I see the consequence in others: and, if ever I intend to mend the prospect in life, (not mentioning certain other considerations,) I must resist the stream. A gentleman whom I know has had 50*l.* per annum a number of years: he has been the constant companion of his superiors, has himself lived of the fat of the land, and loves good living dearly: he has a large family, and, notwithstanding various assistances he receives, amounting on an average to 50*l.* more, he is as poor as death. He is pitied and despised. He gets assisted with little sums to keep his family from starving; and lives himself at other people's tables. Had I just his income and his family, I could, I am fully persuaded, live decently, be esteemed and respected, and not be in a slavish dependence on any one. Had he done this, he might have had assistance of a superior sort.—My rector's other curate is a sensible young man, and something of a scholar. He is likely to be fellow of a college. He has 40*l.* a year from my rector: whether he

has any other income or private fortune I know not: but, from his manner of living, and his fashionable appearance, I am certain he cannot live for much under 80*l.* per annum. It might be expected that I should imitate him; and I can find that he thinks my notions of living a peculiarity laughable and ridiculous: but I think they would be more so were they similar to his. The ambition of a curate of 40*l.* or 50*l.* a year to imitate rectors of some hundreds, and to entertain gentlemen of some thousands, is the very thing that brings the character of clergymen into contempt, by rendering them poor, servile, and dependent.—You must excuse me this reverie. The conversation in which I was engaged last night led me into it. I was brimful, and did not think the time proper to give vent to my sentiments: so now they form a part of my epistle to you, though I am pretty sure you think as I do in great measure.”

Important sentiments are here conveyed, though in a somewhat sportive manner. We may add to them the following observation from a subsequent letter: “Those who take much upon them, and build high without a firm foundation, may attract silly minds, who look no further than a flimsy superstructure: but he who is not above any thing which his circumstances require, though he build slower, yet he builds surer, and in time will, in all probability, have a solid building to protect him, when that of the other is all laid in ruins.”

1774.—“I was yesterday in company with some gentlemen, who were talking of Mr. Brown.

They knew not that I was any relation. I find that my opinion of him is exactly conformable to that of others : they all allow him great merit and abilities, but cannot help deriding his vanity, and blaming his overbearing disposition. It is an established maxim of his, that he will not be contradicted by any body. You will readily form to yourself an idea how agreeable such a resolution must make him in company, and in his family connexions. He is now about to undertake a piece of work within about three miles of this place ; to convert an old house into a new one, and a morass, or something like one, into fine gardens. If they will find money, he will find ingenuity, there is no fear ; but he is not used to sell his ingenuity at a low rate. They place Brown and nature almost on a level : where she errs, he rectifies ; removes mountains, makes rivers and woods, fills up cavities : in short, say but the word, and he changes the whole scene. His ingenuity in this respect is certainly uncommon : and he at one word tells you for what he will execute his plan ; and he always does it well. By this means he has got that great repute, and those affluent circumstances, which he at present enjoys, and is continually increasing. But, as in every thing he is used to give laws, not only to man but to the face of nature ; and as all his undertakings have been crowned with the most flattering success ; this has planted and nourished in him that vanity and overbearing conduct, which render him far less the object of either love or admiration, than he would otherwise be. But enough. We will just observe that this advantage may be drawn from

the consideration of this person's character, That any person, who, like Mr. B., is ingenious in one thing, should be very careful that he do not show to all mankind his conscious superiority; which perhaps he cannot avoid feeling, and which, felt alone, may be an useful spur to action. But doubly careful ought he to be, not to suffer the air of superiority to creep into those things in which he has no claim to excel. The former of these is vanity, the latter self-sufficiency. If his abilities introduce him into the company of his superiors, he ought to be careful not to be too familiar, nor to affect equality: if he be treated with distinction, to use that distinction with moderation; and to take too little, rather than too much upon him, in all companies, superior or inferior. In short, the more flattering circumstances are, the stricter hand ought to be kept, and moderation and an affable behaviour to be the more studied: otherwise as much is lost on one hand as is gained on the other, in point of credit—while love is entirely forfeited; for who can love the man that always claims an implicit submission to his asseverations?"

I shall give only one more extract from letters not decidedly of a religious cast, and written before the author's religious principles were fully settled. It indicates the change which was taking place in his mind.

June 17, 1776.—“I shall perhaps find some difficulty in persuading you, that I am almost as busy as you are, and look for nothing else as long as I live. Nor can I conceive that it was ever designed by providence, that they, whose sole employ is to

exhort others to be diligent and watchful, should themselves be indolent and unemployed: or that they, who are to teach others to renounce the pomps and vanities, diversions and pleasures of this world, should have nothing to do but to indulge and gratify themselves therein. For my part, as regularly as the morning, noon, or even comes, it brings with it its business, which I think I ought not to neglect. Should you ask how this comes to pass so much more than formerly? the answer is, that I see things relative to my profession in another light than I used to do, and regard much more as incumbent upon me."

II.

LETTERS TO MRS. SCOTT'S BROTHER IN LAW.

1778—1785.

NEAR the close of the sixth chapter of my father's Life, a series of letters is adverted to, addressed to the husband of my mother's sister, and mainly employed in urging an immediate and decided attention to the great concerns of religion. This series I shall here introduce, preserving, in their proper places, (in order to avoid any mutilation of the letters,) the few specimens which have already been given to the public.

“DEAR BROTHER,

“Weston Underwood,
August 11, 1778.

“RELIGION was so much the subject of conversation with us when you were in Bucks, that I hope it will not be a disagreeable subject of correspondence. I am so deeply sensible of the importance of religion, that is, of the concerns of eternity, the interests of our immortal souls, and the way and manner in which we may be accepted by a just, holy, almighty, and eternal God, that I am naturally led to think every one as much impressed with the sense of these things as I am; though I have abundant evidence that there are but very few who pay much regard to them: and, of those who do pay some regard, most are so

much blinded and prejudiced by the world, by Satan, and by sin, that their religion is one of their own making, and they know little of that religion which the word of God proposes to us. Now, when you were with us, I felt comfortable under the persuasion that the Lord had sent you with the design of making your coming useful to you: that he had opened your mind to attend to the things which, in public and private, were discoursed to you: you seemed to receive them so willingly, and with such a desire of hearing more and more. You may remember that, though I told you my views of religion over and over, yet I laid little stress upon that: I told you withal, that I did not want you to believe them because *I* taught them, but because the Lord taught them. The Bible being the word of God, his message to us, *able to make us wise unto salvation*, the great point I laboured to impress upon your mind was, the absolute necessity of taking our religion from that book alone, and the obligation we are under to search the scriptures daily, to know what indeed they do contain: to receive what they contain as certain truth, however men, even learned men, and preachers may contradict them; and however contrary they may be to our former notions and conceptions; and how mysterious soever some things in them may appear.—The next thing I laboured to impress was, the necessity of prayer in general, for whatever we want; but especially, when we read the holy scriptures, that we may be enabled by the Holy Spirit to understand them. The word of God teaches us, that *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for*

they are foolishness to him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned : that the Lord must open the understanding before we can understand the scriptures : that, if any man want wisdom, he must ask it of God : that no man cometh unto Christ but as taught of God : that we are to trust in the Lord with all our heart, and not to lean to our own understanding ; in all our ways to acknowledge him, and he will direct our paths : that we must receive the blessings of Christ's kingdom with the teachable humility of a little child, knowing that a man can receive nothing except it be given him of God. Now, could I persuade you (the Lord blessing my words,) to enter upon this course of reading God's word, and prayer, then, I trust, I should have put you into the right way of searching, and the Lord would teach you. Then the papers I put into your hands, and the hints I might from time to time drop in my letters, might be useful.—But this is the first point I wish to gain. By this you may see that I do not want to proselyte you to a system of opinions, but to send you to the word and the Spirit of the Lord, to be taught the way of salvation as it is in Jesus. But I know experimentally how *carefulness about many things* makes one neglect *the one thing needful* : how backward and indisposed all are to enter upon a course of strict religion ; how Satan takes advantage of our corruptions, and besets us on every side : how powerful the allurements of the world are. I can make many allowances for you, but none that will excuse you.—I can only drop one hint more, and that is, that a sinner's salvation is an act of grace ; that we are

to seek it of the Lord as a free gift ; first, seeking an interest in Christ's blood for pardon and peace with God, by faith ; and, secondly, the converting grace of the Holy Spirit to create us anew unto good works, which is a part of our salvation ; and, lastly, continued supplies of grace to help us to go on as we have set out.—My paper is full. We join in love and duty, and especially in prayers to God for you all, for health and comfort here, but particularly that we may all obtain this salvation by Jesus Christ, and meet in heaven.

“Your most sincerely affectionate brother,
“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR BROTHER,

“Weston Underwood,
January 15, 1779.

“YOUR letter gave me great pleasure, not only as it intimates that you are all in tolerable health, but also, and particularly, as it shows that you have not forgotten what you heard and saw amongst us : because, though the important concerns of religion generally, when new to any person, make some little impression upon him, if not an open profligate who can make a jest of them, yet that impression generally wears off, when he returns into the business, hurry, pleasure, and diversions of the world. It is *seed sown by the wayside, or among thorns* ; and either the devil *takes it out of his heart*, or the *cares of the world*, and the *deceitfulness of riches*, or the *desires of other things enter in, and choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful*. But as, after so long a time, you continue to have serious desires, and purposes of carrying into practice what you were then put upon

considering, I would take it as a token for good, and hope that the Lord sent you to Weston to learn something which should be for your everlasting benefit. In order that it may be so, I shall be heartily willing, from time to time, to give you any instructions or information I am able, accompanied, I will assure you, with earnest prayer to God for a blessing upon you and your's.—I would therefore, first, renew my old advice of making it a rule every day to read some portion of the word of God, seriously, attentively, with prayer to God for the teaching of his Holy Spirit to enable you rightly to understand it. *For the natural man receiveth not, &c.* If the Lord do but incline your heart thus to search the scriptures, and to pray continually to him to teach, guide, help, and bless you, you will continually get forward in your acquaintance with spiritual things. Indeed, the word of God meditated on daily, and being instant in prayer; both to be taught what are our wants, and how we may have them supplied, and for that supply as we see our need of it, and discover where it may be had; these are, to a sincere soul, which indeed desires to serve God in his appointed way, the great means, both of learning that way, and being enabled to walk in it.

“The state of your mind, as you describe it, previously to your coming to Weston, is what we call an *unawakened* state; and is what we all have, more or less, had experience of. Being blinded by Satan, and deceived by our own self-love; and being ignorant of God's justice and holiness, and of the strictness, spirituality, and perfection of his law; and not thinking much of that solemn judg-

ment wherein we must give an account of our thoughts, words, and actions, according to that law; we judge of ourselves, and of characters, according to the notions and customs of the world: and, if we fancy any are worse than ourselves, we generally flatter ourselves into our own good opinion, and, without further inquiry, take it for granted that all is well. And this, notwithstanding, perhaps, that we utterly neglect God, and our duty to him, and live wholly without him in the world: notwithstanding that we are strangers to the love of God, our love being placed upon the world, and the things of the world, making *provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*. Thus, walking in *the broad way, according to the course of the world*, and thinking well of ourselves, we look no further, or but little further: and if, at any time, any outward wickedness makes conscience a little uneasy, we think that abstaining in future, or at most some few forms of prayer, repeated as an unwelcome task, will atone for it. Therewith we lull conscience asleep again; and thus live utter strangers to any feeling sense of our need of that Saviour, who came *to seek and save that which was lost*; and cannot possibly know what to make of the glorious things said of him,—his preciousness,—his boundless love,—his *unsearchable riches*,—his being the Christian's *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*,—his *all in all*. In this state, while *the strong man, armed with our ignorance, prejudice, self-love, and love of the world, keeps the castle of our hearts, and his goods are in peace*, the Lord finds those that are saved. By some providence or other, he

brings them in the way of hearing some faithful and close preacher; or he brings them acquainted with some of his believing people; or he puts them upon a diligent reading of the scriptures: these means he who *gives the increase* blesses to them; his Spirit *convinces them of sin*; they hear or read of God as a just and holy God; they find themselves affected in an uncommon manner with the discoveries made to their souls of these his attributes; they learn that he requires *truth in the inward parts*, the supreme unabated love of himself—the whole heart and soul; they find his law strict to the uttermost, making no allowance, requiring perfection, and pronouncing awful curses upon every transgressor; that his perfection forbids him to make any other law; that his dealings with the angels that fell, with the old world, with Sodom and Gomorrah, with Egypt, with the seven nations of Canaan, yea, with his own people, the Jews, for their sins, loudly proclaim his strict justice and hatred of iniquity: comparing their lives, their tempers, their very imagined virtues and duties, with the strict and perfect law, they find that all comes short; they are alarmed; they feel themselves sinners; they see their danger, and begin to seek for a remedy. But, being still strangers to the origin of these evils, the depravity of man's fallen nature, they think they can amend; as you say, assume an absolute power over themselves, when they please; they try, but are disappointed. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?* Perhaps they try again, and sometimes are in great distress. *What must I do to be saved?* becomes the question.

Self, the world, and man's natural wisdom, make many answers. The soul makes trial of them all without success ; till, finding its fears more pressing, and its corruptions more busy, its resolutions wavering, its services consciously imperfect and unpleasant, at length it is brought, sometimes sooner, sometimes later, to consider the apostle's answer, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*—As appears by your letter to me, you are not fully come up to this point yet. You must probably be left to try other schemes first, in order to being brought to a more deep experimental conviction of your lost state, your natural weakness and depravity, and the need you have of a Saviour. But, whether you know it or not, (I hope you will know it,) before you can serve God with comfort and acceptance, you need these two things : 1. Forgiveness of sins. You have been sinning against God in thought, word, and deed, all your life ; as we all have. Your sins of heart and life, of omission and commission, stand against you ; and, till they be accounted for and forgiven, your services cannot be accepted. Every duty you do is short of its perfection, and as such adds to your sins, and needs forgiveness. In this case, the gospel reveals forgiveness through the blood of Christ, *freely* given to every sinner who believes. *Believe, and thou shalt be saved.* Accept this freely as it is offered, and seek, by prayer, for faith to believe this record which God gives of his Son : and then, your sins being forgiven, you will no longer look upon God as an austere master, or severe judge, but as a loving father ; and will, with acceptance and comfort,

pay your services, though imperfect. For, 2. you need moreover a willing mind, and strength to resist temptation. Hitherto I dare say you have constrained your inclination in what you have done in religion: but, if you are brought to faith, living faith in Christ, he will give you other inclinations, *a new heart, and a new spirit, a new nature.* Then *his yoke will be easy; his commandments not grievous; his ways ways of pleasantness.*—But I must stop. If you attend to what, from my own experience, and from the Bible, I have said, it will, I trust, help you out of your waverings, and free you from your difficulties. . . . God bless you and your's.

“Your's affectionately,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR BROTHER,

“Weston Underwood,
February 5, 1780.

“WE received your's, but it came too late for the purpose intended; for your sister¹ arrived before her letter of recommendation. However, we ventured to take her in; and, on conversation, we found she carried about with her a better letter of recommendation than any you could write for her; namely, *an epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on paper, but on the fleshly tables of the heart.* 2 Cor. iii. 3. You know how it is with the freemasons: though not personally acquainted with one another, yet by means of some secret sign, which

¹ The writer's Northumbrian correspondent, to whom many letters inserted in his Life, and some which follow in this volume, were addressed.

other people know nothing of, they can make themselves known to one another; and, when they discover any one to be a freemason, though he come from the other end of the earth, they welcome him as a friend and a brother. Thus is *the secret of the Lord with them that fear him*. Truly converted persons, who have an experimental acquaintance with what Christ calls the *new birth of the Spirit*, and St. Paul, the *new creation*; who know what it is *to pass from death unto life*, from a state of nature into a state of grace, by the powerful teaching and influences of the Holy Spirit; have every one of them a certain set of inward experiences, of which none but themselves know any thing, but of which the least hint is readily understood by those who have experienced the same; by which they know and acknowledge one another as the children of the same father, love as brethren, and delight in doing good to each other as the disciples of the same master, and for his sake. These marks and notices, by which they know one another, are of such a nature as cannot be communicated to others; any more than a man who sees can communicate to a man born blind his perception of light and colours. However, they are such as follow: similar views of the evil of sin, of the depravity of man's nature, of the evil of their own hearts, and their deservedly lost condition in themselves; of their utter inability to save themselves; of their need of a Saviour, of the suitableness and preciousness of Christ, as the Saviour of lost sinners, with longings after him, and counting all but loss for him; sense of the need of conversion in order

to salvation ; deadness to the world, and love of holiness. I had no sooner begun to converse with your sister than I began to hope she was in Christ's school ; and I am more confirmed in my persuasion continually, and feel assured that the Lord sent her among us for her further instruction and establishment. . . . In the mean time, she is as welcome at our house as if she were at home, and to any good offices I can do her. She seems quite happy in our lonely way of living, amidst a succession of preaching, praying, religious conversation, and reading. She is very industrious, &c.

“ Your sincerely affectionate brother,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

When in this letter the writer speaks of Christians as thus knowing one another by the coincidence of their views and experiences, he is not to be understood as asserting any infallible power of “discerning the spirits” of men : but only, as his explanation implies, that a probable opinion may generally be formed. Hypocrites may occasionally impose upon us ; and good men may not always discover one another : but in general the congeniality or want of congeniality will be felt.—On the stigmatized topic of *experiences*, the reader may be referred to my Father's Remarks on the “Refutation of Calvinism,” Book I. c. ii. § 13.¹

“ DEAR BROTHER,

“ Weston Underwood,
July 5, 1780.

“ YOUR letter reminded me of that precious promise, Isaiah lxv. 24, *And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer, and while they*

¹ Works, vol. vii. p. 213—228.

are yet speaking I will hear. You express to the Lord your desire to be taught to pray; and immediately he (I doubt not,) puts a most suitable prayer into your mouth, or rather into your heart; which you have committed to writing, I suppose for my encouragement in writing to you. And it is accompanied, as all prayer ought to be, with thanksgiving, and supplication for others, according to that excellent rule, Phil. iv. 6. I mention these things to lead your attention to the scripture promises and precepts, both that you may be directed to go by scriptural rules in your religious exercises, and to plead scripture promises in prayer, expecting a faithful God to be as good as his word; (which is the precise nature of hoping or trusting in God;) and also to encourage you to proceed in quietly waiting upon the Lord without distraction or doubting, by showing you how, by his Spirit, he is leading you in the good old scriptural way; and has begun to answer your first attempts to pray, and to fulfil his own promises to you. *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee.*

“You may rest assured that *I thank my God on every remembrance of you*, for the work of grace hopefully begun in you, and do frequently *remember you in my prayers, making request with joy*; hoping that it is indeed an effectual work, and *being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.* Phil. i. 3—6. Would you know what I pray for on your behalf, read verses 9—11 of that chapter. And may God moreover make you an instrument, by your ex-

ample, instruction, and prayers, of the eternal salvation of those around you ! I doubt not that what God is doing for you is in answer to the prayers of your Weston relations, and of your sister, who has newly begun, like another Israel, to *wrestle* with God and *prevail* for abundant blessings. And, if the Lord stirs you up in good earnest to join us in these prayers for many around you, I shall confidently expect the most desirable answers. I know by my own experience, as well as from his unerring word, that God is a *God that heareth prayer* ; and that, *when two or three agree together on earth as touching any thing which they shall ask in the name of Jesus, it shall be done for them*. And, though we cannot meet personally to join in prayer for each other, and for others, yet we may, and do (I hope,) spiritually meet before the throne of grace of an omnipresent God. And, if we do but agree *daily* to pray for the eternal salvation of our relations, friends, and neighbours, and persevere with the patience of the woman of Canaan, we shall in due time have the same answer, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt*.

“When you read your Bible, observe what wonderful things are spoken of, promised to, and effected by, prayer. Without prayer we can do nothing : but faith and prayer, engaging an almighty arm on our side, do all things.—And this is the reason why we are so much hindered, discouraged, and tempted in respect of prayer, and meet with so many excuses. It is Satan’s business to keep us from prayer. If he can effect this, he holds us fast at his pleasure in his snare. If we *will* pray, he must lose us. And therefore so

long as ever, by reason of our corruptions and worldly-mindedness, he can keep us from praying, he will. And so long as he can, by means of our foolish fear of men and wicked shame, work upon us, by setting his servants to laugh and scoff, or rail at us, he will. And, were it not that I have neither time nor room, I could show you many of his ways to keep people from prayer, which would be like *telling you all that ever you did*; for *we are not ignorant of his devices*. But let me exhort you not to let either business, or company, or pleasure, or fear, or shame, or any thing else, keep you from prayer, and reading the Bible, and strictly keeping the Sabbath: and then I know the Lord will be your teacher and saviour. And let me beg you to begin family worship, reading a chapter and prayer, once a day at least: though, if once begun, I hope you will find the comfort and benefit of it too much to rest satisfied with once; and that you will no more want exhorting to morning and evening family worship, than you will to take your meals at regular times. For this you may use a book at first: though I hope the Lord will soon teach you by degrees to do without one. I have much more to say upon this subject; but a hint must suffice at present. Prayer is this: to look into the Bible, and see what God has promised: to look into our own hearts, and ask ourselves what we want: and to look up to God to give us what *we* want and *he* has promised, as the purchase of Christ's blood; expecting that, though we are most unworthy, yet he will be as good as his word. Whatever you may determine about public or family worship, I think you cannot but

allow that, for secret prayer, if you have the teaching of God's Spirit, you must know what you want without a book, as well as with one: and words are nothing; the heart is all: and they who are not taught by God's Spirit may read prayers, but cannot pray.....

"Since you left us our poor little boy has been very bad again, and I thought we should have lost him too: but the Lord is gracious, and he has at length restored him.¹ Numbers here and at Ravenstone have had the fever; but none have died since our poor dear babe.² The smallpox is very fatal at Olney:³ but we are preserved yet. . . . As to the money affair, the Lord's will be done. I shall have, to a farthing, as much as is good for me. . . .

"Your's affectionately,

"THOMAS SCOTT."

"DEAR BROTHER,

"Weston Underwood,
November 2, 1780.

"It is no small surprise and concern to both myself and your sister, that we have never for so long a time heard any thing from you. I have waited from one week to another, expecting a letter every post, till I am almost ready to conclude, that either you have totally forgotten us, or have determined never to write to us any more. How is this? Have we offended in any thing? This I cannot suspect; for I am not at all conscious of having done any thing to give offence, except an over-anxious assiduity for what I judge (as doth

¹ Life, pp. 127, 132. (129, 135.) ² Ib. p. 682. (702.) ³ Ib. p. 151. (154.)

your conscience,) your best welfare : nor do I think you are likely to be offended with me, believing you to be both good-natured and sufficiently partial to me, and satisfied of the uprightness of my intentions.—May I conjecture the reason ? If I am mistaken, I hope you will not be offended, as I am solicitous about you, and fearful *lest by any means the tempter have tempted you, and my labour should be in vain* ; which to me would be a great grief, and to you—I cannot express what.—Is not the case thus ? When you had got home, and engaged afresh in worldly business, and got again among former companions, were you not carried away with the stream ? Your impressions gradually wearing off, and conscience making fainter and fainter resistance, hath not your goodness proved *like the morning dew that passeth away* ? Have not *the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, choked the word*, and prevented its bringing forth any fruit to perfection ? Hath not this rendered reflection, especially on what you heard, saw, and thought at Weston, painful ? and therefore, because you do not well know what to say in answer to my last, you delay answering it from time to time.—I have so large an experience of the deceitfulness of my own heart, of sin, and of the world, of its enchanting, bewitching wiles, and of Satan's snares and traps ; and have seen so many such things as this, that I cannot but suspect it : especially as you are not statedly under that preaching, which is calculated to rub off the rust and dulness that we are all apt to contract in our converse with a wicked world.—Oh how glad

should I be to find myself mistaken in this! *for God is my record how earnestly I long after you in the bowels of Jesus Christ*; that I do bear a true brotherly affection towards you, long for your welfare, and not wholly forget to pray for you, and still hope that my prayers shall be answered. Let me, I beg, hear from you; and let the Lord hear from you. If the case be as I fear, oh read and think over the parable of the returning prodigal, and take his wise resolution: follow his example, and you shall have a like success. But remember who has said, *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him*; and, *The last state of that man is worse than the first*; and, *It were better not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after having known it, to turn from the holy commandment.*—The Lord now waits to be gracious; but read the latter part of the first chapter of Proverbs.—Forgive my earnestness: I know the importance of the case, and wish you as well as my own soul. Believe me, the ways of Christ are *pleasantness, and all his paths peace.*

“ I this morning received a letter from your excellent sister. She has been very ill, but wonderfully happy in her affliction. She says, ‘ My body was weak, and full of pain; but my soul was strengthened with the comforts of a merciful God. I had no choice to live or die, but that it might be which way was most for the glory of God. When I was on my expected deathbed, nature seemed to mourn at the thoughts of being separated from my dear parents and friends; but the Lord soon made that no trouble to me, by

assuring me that *to depart and be with Christ was far better.*' Would you, dear brother, have this peace and joy upon a sick and dying bed? Would you *die the death of the righteous?* (Who would not?) Then let nothing divert you from living their life. . . . We have had the children inoculated,¹ and they are recovered; but John has been very bad since of an ague, with dangerous symptoms, but he is now recovering; the Lord being gracious unto us, *that we might not have sorrow upon sorrow.* . . . Believe me to be with best wishes, your most affectionate brother,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR BROTHER,

“Weston Underwood,
January 11, 1781.

“THIS morning I took pen in hand to answer your former letter upon a halfsheet, not purposing to say very much upon religious matters: but, when I had about half done, I received your last; on which I threw the former letter into the fire, and have begun on a larger scale, being encouraged thereby to speak more freely and fully on the vastly important subject. . . .

“And now for the most agreeable and suitable subject of your letters. I rejoice exceedingly at what you tell me concerning yourself. I would not say too much in the way of encouragement. I will not venture to say that you are in a state of grace; that you are converted: I have seen hopeful awakenings wear off; therefore be jealous of yourself: *Be not high-minded, but fear; press*

¹ Life, p. 153. (157.)

forward, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before: but I will venture to say, that your last letter has made my heart leap for joy, and led me confidently to hope for a happy issue, an effectual answer to the many prayers I have, and your sister has offered for you. I hope in time *all* will be answered.—In a former letter you mentioned the world being too much for you, and you hint at the same again. I hope God will give you that *faith which overcometh the world*, which cannot otherwise be overcome: but the following considerations may be in God's hand a means of good. Man is a creature capable of eternal happiness or eternal misery: the few years of his life here bear no more, nor so much proportion to his whole duration, as one moment doth to a million of ages: consequently all the interests and pleasures of a man's life in this world bear not so much proportion to his eternal interests, as the value of a grain of wheat does to the empire of the universe. How infatuated therefore must we be, to give that the preference in our choice, which in our judgment we perceive to be infinitely contemptible and worthless in the comparison. In temporal concerns we are more wise, and know how to proportion our estimation of things to the time we are to enjoy them; and are not willing to give so much for a dinner at a nobleman's table, or a walk in his park, as we would for the inheritance of his estate. How blind and perverse and depraved therefore must man by nature be, who universally, in things spiritual and eternal, acts contrary to this plain dictate of common

sense !—Besides, *godliness has the promise of this life*, as well as *of that which is to come*: and we are likely to have as much comfort in the world, when the only wise God manages and chooses for us, as when we poor short-sighted worms undertake to choose and manage for ourselves, and take not only the doing of our business into our own hands, but anxiously perplex ourselves about the event. *Seek first the kingdom of God, &c.*

“Again, you speak of the reproach of the world. Rejoice in it. What, are you unwilling to be put upon a footing with apostles and prophets, yea with your master himself? Can you be more highly honoured than by such reproach? *The spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.* If you are reviled for Christ in this world, you shall be acknowledged by Christ in another, with every circumstance of honour, before the assembled world, amidst applauding angels; while the wicked despisers shall wonder and perish, and gnash their teeth in envy, rage, and despair, curse their folly, and despise themselves to eternity, infinitely more than they now pretend to despise you. Pretend, I say; for, if you are consistent, and live like a Christian, they will reverence you in their hearts, and show it by being under visible restraint in your company, while they pretend to laugh at you.—Further, as a man of business and a moral man, you have learned to despise the jeers of drunkards, and those unhappy wretches who, for momentary gratification, entail temporal disease and poverty on themselves. You see that their conduct is madness and folly, and that your sobriety and industry are comparative wisdom. Now

in the eye of God, and of the truly godly, the most worldly-wise man on earth is no less a fool and a madman, if not *rich towards God*. Learn to consider as such those who, for the unsatisfactory enjoyment and interest of time, (a very moment,) forfeit the pure pleasures and enjoyments of eternity: and the laughter of fools and madmen will excite your pity, and incline you to pray for them, rather than give you much uneasiness. I will in this respect assure you that this trial, though sharp at first, and a great snare to you, will, if you are enabled steadily to withstand it, soon be over. The world will be weary of despising you: and, if not, you will grow totally indifferent about it; yea you will *rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer shame* for Him, who endured the cross for you.

“Again, you have trials which come still nearer. I am sorry for them, but not surprised at them. You must expect such things, if you become Christ’s disciple. *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. But whosoever forsaketh all for my sake and the gospel’s, shall receive a hundred fold more in this present time, and in the world to come eternal life.* In the mean time much meekness, and great tenderness and respect, with but little said; a persevering firmness in the line of duty, together with many prayers offered in secret; will probably be of blessed consequence, in the Lord’s time,—which it behoves you to wait.

“Again, many think there is no occasion to make so much to do about religion. If the acquisition of 10,000*l.* a-year were in prospect, these

same persons would think you could not be too active, and earnest, and circumspect, and careful, to miss no opportunities, and to leave no flaws. How much better is the inheritance of the children of God, than that of 10,000*l.* a-year? Therefore how much more commendable to give all diligence and care to make all sure; and rather to overdo than run hazards.—Not that worldly business is to be neglected; for it is a part of our duty, and we are God's servants therein, who are to be diligent.

“You seem sensible of your sinful lost condition, and need of total conversion; but are not affected with these things as you suppose others are, and as you ought to be. It is right to be so: we have all need to be vastly more affected than we are: but be not discouraged: it is vastly better than being much affected, and resting in that, or being proud of it.

“As I have no room to say all that is in my mind, let me hear from you as soon as you can, and I will write again. In the mean time, neglect not prayer; read your Bible; think much of eternity; keep out of scoffing company; omit no opportunities of hearing the word of God; and let nothing cause you to drop family worship. Love to sister——. . . . May she be the mother of a *Samuel*!¹ Assure her that, when I want her to be very religious, I want her to be very happy, as I am. We wish you all a happy new year.

“Your affectionate brother and friend,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

¹ 1 Sam. i. 20.

The next letter, dated Weston, February 15, 1781, relates chiefly to Olney, of which he was about to become curate, and is inserted in the life.¹

“DEAR BROTHER,

“Olney,
July 4, 1781.

“THAT I may not delay in the midst of my engagements, I must content myself with writing a little, and postponing a more full answer to many things in your letter till another opportunity. We rejoice in the birth of your daughter. My prayer is that she may live, if the Lord be pleased to spare her, to be—what? a lady riding in a coach? no: a good Christian, one who lives the life of faith, walking with God, glorifying him, and serving her generation in whatever station the providence of God places her; that at length, when a few, few years are gone, she, you, and her mother, &c, and I and mine, may all meet in the realms above, to sing the song of poor redeemed sinners, *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, be glory and dominion, for ever and ever: Amen.*—As to sister —— I can only desire that she may be enabled to speak the language of the hundred and sixteenth psalm, appointed to be read on such occasions, with the same spirit of faith, love, and gratitude, with which the psalmist penned it. . . .

“You have asked me some questions which I cannot now fully answer: but a hint I will drop. *To take up our cross*, I apprehend, means this;

¹ Page 191, (196.)

simply to follow the Lord in the path of duty, and patiently and cheerfully to bear every thing which in that path we meet with ; whether it be reproach, contempt, worldly loss, poverty, hatred, persecution, temptation : not to be diverted from the path of duty by any of these things ; but, when adherence to known duty requires it, and God by his word and providence calls for it, to be willing to part with friends, substance, character, ease, life itself ; assured that the Lord is able to compensate all losses, and to make amends for every trial. It is called the *cross*, because that *death of the cross*, which Jesus our pattern, as well as ransom, suffered, was then accounted the very sum and substance of what could be endured in this world : and, if a man was willing to carry a cross, and be nailed to it, for Christ's sake, as Christ carried his, he then assuredly would flinch from no other suffering.

“ You say, there are many opinions. Thank God for your Bible : read it much ; and form both your sentiments and conduct upon it. Thank God for a throne of grace, and a promise that, *if any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God*. Plead this day by day in prayer, and the Lord will teach you. I know some about you are too fond of controversy ; but keep you to your Bible and the throne of grace : and, when time serves, I will drop a hint on such matters as I judge to be important.

“ As to your frequenting the Lord's table, you are uncomfortably circumstanced : and yet I think I should advise you to go ; but not without much preceding prayer, remembering that it is a

solemn acceptance of Christ as your Lord and Saviour, and surrender of yourself to him, to be his for ever, and to live to his glory.

“That you have need to cry instantly and constantly to the Lord, *to hold you up that you may be safe*, is certain, and you are sure to fall hurtfully when you neglect it; but, if you are truly the Lord’s, while you do this, you are not to distress yourself about the final issue; for he hath engaged not to let you fall fatally. Christ will not let Satan *pluck his sheep out of his hand*. They are *kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*. Only *give diligence to make your calling and election sure*. Those who are spoken of in the scripture you mention were never truly converted, but only outwardly changed. . . .

“Your’s affectionately,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

“DEAR BROTHER,

“Olney,
July 21, 1784.

“AFTER long waiting I received your letter, and am sincerely glad and thankful that the Lord has made my sister the living mother of a living son: and I as sincerely wish and pray that he may live to be a comfort to you: which he will be most likely to be, if you and his mother do really, and heartily, and daily, bring him by faith and prayer to the Lord Jesus, that he may lay his hands upon him and bless him. Bring him and dedicate him to the Lord; and then *he* will do by you as Pharaoh’s daughter did by Moses’ mother; he will bid you take him home, and bring him up for him; and he too will reward you for bringing

up your children for him. I hope, dear brother, now the Lord is increasing your family, you will be the more careful in praying for them and with them, setting them a good example, and, as they become capable of it, giving them every godly instruction; remembering that they are to live for ever either in happiness or misery; and that God has said, *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*—I hope, dear brother, you will cease from your over anxiety about the world, and about growing rich, which will infallibly prevent you from being *rich towards God*, and cause you to be like that rich man whom Christ mentions, and calls *a fool*, in the twelfth chapter of Luke. You have had frequent convictions, and have several times been *almost persuaded to be a Christian*: but let me in love ask you, yea ask your own heart, Have you gone any further? Are you altogether a Christian? Do you in judgment *count all things but dung that you may win Christ*? Do you in practice *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*? Do you stand prepared to leave all, deny yourself, and follow Christ, when called to it? Are you weaned from outward things, so as in temper and affection to have *left* them; possessing them *as though you possessed them not, using them as not abusing them, seeing the fashion of this world passeth away*? Do you actually leave for Christ all that your conscience admonishes you to leave, whether profit, pleasure, company, credit, friendship, or whatsoever it be that entangles and ensnares you, and prevents your simply following Jesus whithersoever he calleth you? Are you looking to him *to*

bless you in turning you away from your iniquities? or to the world to satisfy you in making provision for your lusts? True Christianity, dear brother, requires all this, and much more: and I am *jealous over you with a godly jealousy*. I hope you will not only excuse me, but love me the better, for thus anxiously desiring and seeking your salvation. I greatly fear your heart is yet *thorny ground*, and that, though the good seed has seemingly taken root and sprung up, yet *the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful*. If so, go directly to Jesus Christ, and beg of him to make your heart good ground, that the seed may henceforth *spring up, and bring forth a hundred fold*. Your long silence, and making no mention of the precious Saviour and your precious soul in your last, give me much reason to suspect. Oh, for your soul's sake, spread this letter before the Lord, and spend an hour or two in reflecting, examining, praying over it. If you could *gain the whole world, and lose your own soul*, what would it profit? Oh, mind the *one thing needful*! Be diligent in true religion! Seek grace to make you a faithful follower of the Lamb! and then you will find that peace and joy which you now in vain seek in a deceitful world—Write soon, and let me hear good news of you and your's; that you really *love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*. My wife joins in love and prayers with

“your truly loving brother,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

"DEAR BROTHER,

"Olney,
April 9, 1785.

"I own I have not paid proper attention to your postscript, or I should have answered your letter sooner. But I have had many engagements, and am frequently indisposed, and, alas! more frequently indolent. I have waited some time lately in expectation of ———, intending to send some letters, and some copies of a sermon I published on the thanksgiving day: but, now the time is come, I have only this evening to prepare, and am but poorly in health, and not capable of writing much. I should have been glad if it had been deferred about a fortnight longer, as I could then have sent you a parcel of books that are now printing—on Repentance. But that must be deferred. The sermons I now send you you may lend, and give among your friends, as you see good; and I am not desirous of selling one, as the printer is paid, and I am no loser: but, if I send you some of the Discourse upon Repentance, you must sell them; because I publish them so cheap, that, if most of them are not sold, I shall be money out of pocket, besides my labour; which I cannot afford.

"But to come to more important matters. I was much pleased with your last letter; and was thereby encouraged to pray with more earnestness for you all. I do not know Mr. ———; but like your account of him, and your sister's; for I suppose it relates to the same person. I hope you will all value and improve the opportunity of hearing statedly a faithful minister of Jesus Christ;

and *be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving*, not others, but *your own selves*. Of the rich mercy of our offended God, all things which the vilest slave of sin and Satan needs, in order to be made accepted, holy, and happy to eternity, are laid up in Christ, as in a treasury; the purchase of his atoning blood, the fruit of his availing intercession. All this is revealed and proposed to us in the word of God, and we are most pressingly invited and entreated to partake of it, as the gift of God to us. Nothing then is wanting to complete our blessedness, but such a view of our own wretchedness and vileness, and of the suitableness and preciousness of the blessings thus freely offered us, and of the propriety and glory of the way and manner in which alone a holy offended God will bestow them, as shall render us willing to accept them, and sincere and diligent in seeking them. But we are naturally proud and carnal: because we are proud, we like not the humbling plan of being saved in the character of condemned sinners: because we are carnal, we despise spiritual blessings in comparison with worldly interests and gratifications, which we must forego for them. Therefore we *must be born again*: and, *except a man be born again, he can neither see, nor enter into the kingdom of heaven*. But, when once our eyes are open to behold the glory of that God, from whom we have revolted; the relations and obligations we are under to him; the hatefulness of every sin; our own sinfulness, and the world's vanity and insufficiency; then we begin to repent of sin, and cry for mercy; then we understand the worth of eter-

nal things, and the value of our souls: then we see the need we have of an infinite redeemer and sanctifier: then a man perceives the nature and glory of the gospel, and Jesus becomes precious to his soul: he feels innumerable wants, and he sees no other source of supply: he sees by faith a fulness in Christ: the word of God assures him he is welcome to all he wants: he is invited and commanded to ask, that he may receive: he says, *Lord teach me to pray!* he begins to ask and to receive; persists in the midst of discouragements and hindrances, and continues to receive; and, the more he receives, the more he hungers and thirsts, and the more his desires and capacities of receiving are enlarged. Thus he receives from Christ daily; he lives to him, constrained by love; grows more like him; hates sin more, and despises the world more: and thus glorifies God here, and is ripening for the enjoyment of him hereafter. In this way I hope you and your dear wife are beginning to walk. Be assured that you are welcome to all *the unsearchable riches of Christ*, if you desire them, and ask for them: *Ask, therefore, and receive, that your joy may be full.*

“My younger son has been ill above this quarter of a year, but is recovering. My wife joins in love.

“Pray for your's,

“T. SCOTT.”

The reader cannot possibly, I think, rise from the perusal of this series of letters without being struck with the piety, zeal, faithfulness, wisdom, and affection, which so eminently distinguish them. One is struck also with the freshness of impression with which they exhibit fundamental doctrines, and with the vividness of their description of the earlier stages of Christian experience. In short, they strikingly illustrate the character of the writer's religion. They are remote, indeed, from "that wretched quality, by which the sacred name of *charity* is now so generally and so falsely usurped, and which is no other than indifference; which, against the plainest evidence, or at least when there is strong ground of apprehension, is easily contented to believe that all goes on well, because it has no anxieties to allay, no fears to repress:" but they abound with that "true charity" which is "wakeful, fervent, full of solicitude, full of good offices, not so easily satisfied, not so ready to believe that every thing is going on well as a matter of course; but jealous of mischief, apt to suspect danger, and prompt to extend relief."¹—They are equally remote also from that indiscriminate religion, whose first object seems to be, to inspire consolation rather than to produce safety; and which, unscripturally confounding faith with personal assurance of salvation, seems, at least, to press upon every one a confidence of his own good state, and acts as if no evil were so prevalent, or so much to be deprecated, as doubting of our own present ac-

¹ Wilberforce's Pract. View, c. vii. § 1.

ceptance with God. The writer of these letters hesitates not to address our fears, as well as our hopes, and brings every scriptural principle and consideration, and not one only, to bear upon us, each in its proper place and direction.—We may apply in this connexion, his own observation made many years after, in speaking of Mr. Hart's Hymns: "To doubt the truth of God's word, or the power and willingness of Christ to save all that truly come to him, is direct unbelief: but to doubt whether *I* come aright, and am a true believer, when many things in my experience and conduct seem inconsistent with the life of faith and grace, is the grand preservative against delusion, and incitement to watchfulness, self-examination, and circumspection. And the same is the case with respect to fear."¹

¹ See Letter in Life, p. 339. (349.)

III.

LETTERS TO THE SISTERS OF THE PRECEDING
CORRESPONDENT.

1783—1784.

*To Mrs. R., described in the Author's Life as his
"Friend in Northumberland."*¹

"DEAR COUSIN,

"Olney,
April 15, 1783.

"WHEN your letter came to hand, I was in Lincolnshire, whence I returned on the 19th of last month; and, the very day I arrived at home, it pleased the Lord to begin to afflict me with my very common asthmatical complaint, which I had very bad, and with several relapses; so that, though I was never quite laid by, so as not to preach on the Lord's day, yet I was brought low, and am scarcely recovered yet. This is the only reason of my so long delaying to answer your letter.

"I had a very comfortable journey, found my friends more cordial, and more disposed to give me a patient hearing, than I expected, and some of them treading the ways of the Lord; others somewhat hopeful. I had a door of utterance opened unto me beyond expectation, and return-

¹ A small part of this Letter has appeared in the Life, p. 162, 163. (166.)

ed home full of sanguine hopes that some good would be done by my journey. This, it seems, was more than my poor foolish heart could bear : there needed some bitter to qualify and counter-act all this sweet ; some physic after so much feasting. Therefore my wise and kind Physician, (having in mercy brought me home first,) immediately discerning the danger, applied the remedy, and I am very base if I do not heartily thank him for it. (2 Cor. xii. 1—10.)

“ This you will find in your experience continually (supposing, as I verily believe, that you are the Lord’s, and longing after nearness and conformity to him,) either in a way of providence, by outward things, or in his dealings with your soul in respect to inward exercises. When he sees that, by needful chastisements, disappointments, temptations, and humbling experimental discoveries of the badness of our hearts, we are drooping, and beginning to yield to discouragement ; our hands to hang down, and our knees to wax feeble ; our minds to be heartless in duty, and dispirited about means, as if praying, reading, hearing, availed nothing : then he will give us some cordial, something to encourage our hopes, to cheer and strengthen us, and enable us *to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint ; yea to sing in the ways of the Lord.* But, when our gracious Lord sees that, by having our desires in outward things, a freedom from trials and temptations, and much liberty and comfort in religion, our silly hearts begin to be lifted up ; that we grow prone to self-confidence, and self-preference, and to shine in our own eyes, as something better and more ex-

cellent than others, as persons of some eminence or importance ; or, when he sees us cleaving to earthly things, idolizing them, or growing unwatchful ; he will soon in his love, and care, and wisdom, send us some salutary affliction, temptation, or bitter humbling experience ; and it is a mercy if we are not left, as Hezekiah was, by some outward sin to learn the depth of the depravity of our hearts. Now I suppose, by your letter, that you are learning these lessons in your experience, and that I am only telling you what you knew before ; but with this advantage, that I state it before you as the Lord's dealing with those he loves ; and endeavour to point out to you that there is unspeakable wisdom and grace in this his management, to keep us at once humble and thankful, and in good measure joyful ; that you may take the comfort of it, and give him the praise. You have nothing to do but to keep close to the means, especially reading the word, and prayer ; to avoid sin and temptation as much as you can, and to follow after holiness as the grand blessing in time and eternity ; seeking it from Christ by faith and prayer, as the purchase of his blood, and the fruit of his intercession : and in this way, which is your part, leave all the rest to the Lord, and give him credit for it that he will manage all for you well and wisely, faithfully and graciously. And, if in this way your experience teaches you to think more and more highly of the Lord, and more and more meanly of yourself, and of all your attainments, this is all right, for it is according to the truth : for He is infinitely great and good, glorious and lovely, and we are much

meaner and viler than can be expressed, or than we any of us in this world think ourselves to be. This also will make us more and more humble and self-denied; more full of reverence of his majesty, love of his excellency, delight in his sufficiency, gratitude for his mercies, zeal for his glory, submission to his will, confidence in his love, and devotedness to his service; which is the very temper of a child, *the spirit of adoption*, whereby *the Spirit witnesseth with our spirit that we are the children of God.*"

To another Sister.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF PARDON—AND THE
WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

"Olney,
May 22, 1783.

—"Your sister, having had my letters blessed of God to her soul, has an opinion that they would be attended with the same blessing to you. She has therefore begged me to write to you. Whether the Lord will be pleased to own the feeble attempt or not, I cannot tell: but both my general regard to all who love the Lord, and my particular attachment to your family, and my being *a debtor* to all to do them all the good in my power, incline me to make the trial, and to give you my thoughts on the subjects proposed. And may the Lord teach me to speak a word in season, which may both relieve and profit your soul, and teach you how to be helpful to others in like perplexities!

“The two main things that your sister mentions are these : 1. Others know the time when, and the place where, the Lord spake peace to their souls ; but you do not. 2. Others have *the witness of the Spirit* ; but you do not know any thing of it.

“Now, in our day, there is a vast outcry among the ungodly against enthusiasm, and every thing in diligent religion is branded with that name. Would to God care were taken among ministers and Christians to guard against the thing itself, while they treat with neglect unjust censures about it!—Believe me, there is a great deal of enthusiastical delusion in this matter : and those things which you are desirous of, and troubled at wanting, are, in *their* sense of them, unscriptural ; and give Satan an occasion of deluding some, and distressing others. By setting up false evidences of conversion, and overlooking the true ones, many think they are converted, who are only stony-ground hearers : they have these false evidences, and are more confident than conscientious. Others that are humble, and tender in conscience, but paying an undue regard to these false evidences, distress themselves because they want them. Now, though true Christians sometimes have them, yet hypocrites are much more likely to have them ; they being such as Satan can counterfeit, and doth counterfeit to deceive and lull asleep persons under some convictions, but not converted :—as, for example, words brought to the mind, wondrous sights to the imagination, pleasing feelings in the soul.

“Now, though, in some cases, persons may

know the time and the place, both when they were awakened, and when they were comforted ; yea, when they were brought to submit to God's righteousness in their condemnation, notwithstanding all their endeavours, and to cast themselves on his free mercy through the blood of Jesus, and to see his whole character and conduct lovely, and Christ precious, and his salvation glorious, and holiness beautiful, and his service perfect freedom : yet it is not generally thus. At first, knowledge is usually scanty, experiences are indistinct, and views of divine things are confused, and mixed with inconsistency. *Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning.* Now in the morning the day dawns, a glimmering beam diffuses itself ; but it is dusk still, and objects are indistinctly perceived : but gradually it grows lighter. Thus it commonly is with true Christians.—In time they find that these effects are produced : and, if they are *certainly* produced, it matters not whether we know when or where. If God hath shewn you the strictness and goodness of the law, and your obligations as his creature to love and obey him according to it, so as to convince you that, by nature and practice, you are an inexcusable sinner, deserving of his wrath ; that none of your doings can make him your debtor, or give you any claim upon his justice, or make it unjust in him to condemn you : if you see your best deeds to be sinful, and to need forgiveness ; and, seeing this, take the blame to yourself, cast yourself on free mercy, as a justly condemned sinner ; see a suitableness in God's way of saving sinners, through the infinitely

valuable obedience and atonement of Emmanuel, honouring the law, and satisfying justice in our stead, that he *might be just, and the justifier* of the ungodly : if you have thus learned to see God's whole character lovely,—that one so great and glorious, so holy and just, should be so compassionate, merciful, and loving : if, in this way, you have learned to hate sin, to love holiness, and follow after it, and to be humbled, ashamed, and grieved that you are no more holy ; to feel a spirit of cordial love to God's character, government, and gospel, gratitude to him for his mercies, zeal for his glory ; wanting others to know, love, serve, and enjoy his favour ; considering his cause as your's ; being grieved when his name is dishonoured, and rejoicing in the prosperity of religion ; praying from your heart the beginning of the Lord's prayer :—if this has taught you to desire to be patient in trouble, to be contented in your station, to depend on his providence, to adorn his gospel, and live to his glory ; you then have the substantial evidences of conversion, such as they who have the most of the others have in general little of. This filial spirit toward God is *the spirit of adoption ; the seal of the Spirit*, which the devil can neither break nor counterfeit ; *the earnest of the Spirit*, a part of heaven brought down into the soul as a pledge of the whole. And, when the Holy Ghost brings these implanted graces into lively vigorous exercise, then he *witnesses with our spirits that we are God's children* ; and not by any words brought to the mind, as many are deluded to believe. The latter, Satan can counter-

feit, and it has nothing divine in it: the former is divine, from God, and leading to God.

“Finally, keep close to the Bible, and to the throne of grace, and bring all doctrines to that standard, and never prize or trust to, or grieve in the want of, what is unscriptural.—If what I write be of any use to you, I shall be glad to hear from you, and will endeavour to satisfy your mind in any other difficulty. You are also at liberty to communicate the contents to any other, if you think they may do good. Let nothing discourage you. If you are not sure that you have experienced what I have mentioned, only go on in the use of means: *An open door is set before you, and no man can shut it.* There is love enough in Christ’s heart, merit enough in his blood, power enough in his arm, knowledge and wisdom enough treasured up in him, to supply all the wants of the poorest, guiltiest, most polluted, most foolish, and weakest of sinners. *Of his fulness have all we received:* and, *Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.*

“Your sincere friend,

“and I hope brother in Christ Jesus,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

To the former Sister, Mrs. R.

“Olney,
May 6, 1784.

“WE ought to have that hearty desire after the spiritual good of our friends and relatives which may put life into our prayers for them, and

endeavours about them : but, let me observe, we may run into an extreme, when our anxiety is so great as to produce a spirit contrary to implicit submission to the divine sovereignty. *Be still and know that I am God.* This is no debt he owes us ; and therefore, if he refuses, he expects our acquiescence : and in this acquiescence a great part of our *loving Christ more than father and mother*, and all the nearest relatives, consists. Thus, when Nadab and Abihu died in their transgression, *Aaron held his peace.* Eli honoured his sons more than God : yet, being convinced, humbled, and penitent, he said, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* Nor can we entirely excuse David of blame, for his inordinate grief for the death of rebellious Absalom. There was a want of submission to the sovereignty of God, in whose justice, holiness, wisdom, goodness, he ought to have implicitly acquiesced ; and to have accounted his own petty personal concerns, however near to him, as nothing in comparison with the glory of the great God, before whom all the inhabitants of the earth are *less than nothing, and vanity.* God will do no injustice to any : *he delighteth in mercy* : but *he delighteth not in the death of a sinner.* He hath allowed and encouraged us to pray for our friends : frequently, in infinite condescension, he heareth and answereth these prayers. He may answer them many years hence ; and we have still encouragement to pray on, and use means : if finally he doth not grant our desires, he hath good reasons for it, which, when hereafter we see them, will satisfy us that it was wisest, and best, and most

for his glory, and for the great ends of his government, that it should not be : and, in the belief of this, we ought to be satisfied now, and to adopt the submissive language of Eli. The Lord hath graciously heard prayer for some of my relatives ; others I stand in doubt of ; some are virulent opposers ; and several, very near to me, are gone into eternity without giving evidence of any change. Trials of this kind you also must expect : and, I hope, the reasons and considerations I have suggested will prepare you for them. What a sovereign God hath done for us, personally, can never enough be valued and acknowledged. If he honours prayers and means for one and another, how great his condescension and our obligation ! While we live and they live, let us persist in the same means, and hope for greater things : but let us beg of God that we may be preserved from repining, when he sees good to cross us in some part of these our inclinations : for, however laudable these desires are in us, we are very shortsighted, and see but a small part of his plan ; and, consequently, are not competent to judge whether it be best on the whole that they should be gratified or not. *Not our will, but thine be done !* is our motto. I shall ever be happy to write a word in season to you in every circumstance and situation."

IV.

LETTERS TO HIS SISTERS.

1778—1797.

To His Brother's Wife.

“DEAR SISTER.

“ Weston Underwood,
March 10, 1778.

“ I RECEIVED your last kind letter, and, wonderful to tell, am already set down to answer it. It gives me great pleasure to hear so good an account of you and your family, and especially of your husband and your eldest son. May the Lord continue them both, and all the rest, long to you, and make them comforts to you! For all worldly comforts are held by the same uncertain tenure: they may at any time be taken from us, and therefore it is prudent, as well as pious, to sit as loose to them as possible: or they may be continued to us when, on various accounts, they have quite ceased to be comforts. Such is this world and all that it contains! It has also another bad property: all things in it are unsatisfying: they may refresh, but they cannot fill the capacities of an immortal soul, nor quiet those restless hankerings after something more, and something better, which all anxiously seek to gratify, except

those few who have found the one thing needful. *All these things are against us:* and, the more they teach us the vanity of the world, and the folly of dependence thereon, so much the more do they recommend to us that satisfying good, that *pearl of great price*, which the psalmist speaks of when he says, *The Lord is my portion; the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, yea I have a goodly heritage;* and, those *pleasures, and that fulness of joy*, which are *at God's right hand for evermore*. How the world sinks in the esteem of that man who hath set his affections on things above, and laid up his treasure in heaven, and with full purpose of heart is daily following it; and, like Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, *walketh with God*, as one friend doth with another. This is the most desirable thing on earth, as it enables us, while we live in, to live above the world; to manage its affairs and enjoy its comforts, the same as others do, without having our happiness depending on, or exposed to the uncertainty of, things here below. While we are indulged with the comforts of kind friends, dear relatives, conveniences, &c., we taste, and are thankful for, the goodness of God in them: but, when he who gave is pleased to take away, faith helps us to see goodness and wisdom even in his so doing; to rest satisfied that all is ordered by a friend, who fully intends our good, who is infallible in counsel, and cannot mistake what is good for us; and whose power is so unlimited that he can make *all things work together for our good*. We learn to consider all our affairs as in his hands; his goodness and his promise as our security: and on that

ground we rejoice even in tribulation.—How do they misunderstand religion, who are afraid lest being too religious should hurt their comforts, and lessen their enjoyments. True religion, vitally received into the heart, lessens nothing but our cares, perplexities, anxieties, and fears. It bids us *cast all our care upon God, who careth for us*; and to trust in him who hath promised *never to leave us nor forsake us*. It bids us, according to our station, to attend to the duty of every day in its day; and, while we employ every prudent precaution, to take no anxious thought for the morrow. It teaches us to regard the Almighty as our friend and father; our constant protector against every danger; our support under every trial and temptation; our counsellor, to whom we are always to repair in every difficulty; our comforter under every trouble; and our help in every struggle. This is religion. It calls off from vanities, and from vice; but it gives us things so much better, that we no sooner taste them, than we lose our relish for, and are disgusted with, those things which we are called to renounce. It calls us to break off evil habits, and to perform strange things, like changing the negro's skin and the leopard's spots; like cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye: but no sooner do we in good earnest set about compliance, than the mountains are removed, and the rough places made plain, and we find an assistance sufficient for every service. Our worldly employments, which we before conducted on worldly principles, we now carry on as doing the duties of our station; they are *sanctified to us by the word of God*

and prayer ; and whether we eat, or whether we drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God. Thus we learn to serve God even in our ordinary employments, doing them in his sight, and *as unto him*, and depending on him for a blessing. What he gives, that we receive, and are thankful for it: when he withholds or takes away, we resign without murmuring or complaining: *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good!* When we abound, we have *to give to him that needeth*; and, by giving to the poor, *we lend unto the Lord*, who has promised to repay us with interest. When we are in straits, we learn to trust in him *who feedeth the young ravens that call upon him; whose are the cattle upon a thousand hills*; and in whose hand are the hearts of all, and who *never faileth them that trust in him*.—Thus we learn to live: and then, when we have learned to live and *walk with God* here, without the vail, we shall have little reluctance to step through, and walk still more closely with him within the vail.—In the mean time, when we read God's word, he speaks to us; when we pray, we speak to him: a blessed correspondence is begun and carried on here, which is the earnest of what we shall be admitted to hereafter.

“ But how shall poor weak sinful man be admitted to this familiarity with the God of heaven? *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* The truth is, that we are all *by nature children of wrath*; and *by wicked works enemies unto God*; and by transgressions of God's law under its penalty; and by unholiness abominable to a holy God. But this is the grace and benefit of re-

demption: *Christ suffered once for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. He reconciled us to God in one body by the cross. Being enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.*

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It is that spiritual thirst which is the only fitness required for our taking of the waters of life freely. That one word) of your's) persuades me that the Lord hath heard my prayers, and blessed the few words I have spoken and written to you upon religion.—The great hindrance to men's becoming true Christians is a blindness to their own wants, and needs, and danger. They are secure and satisfied, and resolve to hope well, and think themselves better than others, and never compare the frame of their minds, and the tenour of their lives, with the strict and spiritual law of God: and therefore they see not their need of a Saviour; and therefore know not how to prize him. But, when this obstacle is removed, and men see themselves to be poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked, then it is easy to point out Christ the *Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world*, as an all-sufficient, all-gracious Saviour, out of whose fulness all our wants are to be supplied.—I must only add, that, though these convictions (and I am no little conversant among such as feel them, and I know what they mean myself,) are no pleasing visitants, they are happy presages. You may expect a struggle in passing through *the strait gate*, but, depend upon it, *the narrow way*, when you have fairly entered,

is a very pleasant road; and we envy none of those their pleasures, who tread *the broad road that leadeth to destruction*.—I have only two reasonable directions to give you: 1. Trust no preacher, nor any uninspired writer, concerning the nature of true religion; but make it a rule every day to read one or more chapters of God's word, the New Testament chiefly: begin with St. John's Gospel, and the apostolic Epistles: and pray to God to enable you to understand. 2. As you come to see your wants, rest satisfied that the Lord alone can supply them; and seek to him by prayer for the very thing you want. If another's words do not suit you, never fear to use your own.—Follow these two directions heartily, and with a view to a blessing from God upon them: and, if you find they are effectual for you, as I have found them to be in my own experience, then recommend them to as many others as are willing to hear.

“Do not be offended that I treat you as a novice in religion: I know the general *form* is not the *power*; and I make no doubt that you see religion to be a very different thing than you once supposed. I once thought I knew much; but, being *converted and become a little child*, I only know how to direct *new-born babes to the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby*.—My prayers you are sure to have, in both your spiritual and temporal concerns: my best poor directions and instructions, if you find them worth having. You have many souls, under God, depending upon you, and the Lord knows how extensive a blessing you may be made.—

You will give my love to my brother: but I would have him see this letter. My wife joins in love and good wishes, and threatens a letter when our little boy can run alone, which he seems in a fair way to do. Love to all your little ones.—May God bless you all in all things is the hearty prayer of your affectionate brother,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

The above is the only fragment I have been able to recover of a long series of letters addressed to this correspondent, and highly valued by her. The rest were all, I believe, destroyed after her death.

To Mr. and Mrs. Ford, Southampton.

“ Weston Underwood,
September 28, 1779.

“ DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,

“ FOR I am to write in answer to a letter written in both your names: I had almost given up the hope of hearing from you any more when I received your's.¹ Once more I had purposed to write, that in the mouth of two witnesses every word might be confirmed: but I was a good deal relieved when I found that at last you were willing to write to me again. As to all that is past therefore I shall say and think no more with any degree of dissatisfaction; and for the future shall be glad to be considered as a near relation; whe-

¹ See Life, p. 139 (142.)

ther or not the Lord answers my prayers by giving you access to that comfort, and those well-grounded hopes, to which I trust he hath admitted me. On that subject I would in great measure be guided by your inclinations: for, as I know that *a man can receive nothing except it be given him of God*, I am sensible that it is not to any purpose to force a great deal of religious conversation or correspondence, in a way of controversy, upon any one. It is probable I shall see cause to drop hints now and then, but I shall enter no deeper into any matter, except as you yourselves afford me the occasion. However at present I have somewhat to say because you say somewhat.

“1. You say you desire that happiness I have described, and should be glad of every assistance that I have it in my power to give. To this I answer, that that happiness is the gift of God to those who truly believe the gospel, walk with God, and hold communion with him. *The blood of Christ cleanseth their souls from all sin*; they are *accepted in the beloved*; adopted to be the *children of God*; have his Spirit *dwelling in them* to sanctify and comfort them; have a consolatory persuasion that all *shall work for their good*: they look back with humble gratitude, forward with joyful hope; and, inwardly supported by grace, are enabled to resign to the present trial, and leave the unseen to-morrow to their God.—The only assistance it is in my power to give you in order to your obtaining this sweet serenity, consists in these two things: 1. Telling you how I came to it—namely, by seeking for it in the word of God, *as for hid treasure*, praying for the Lord

to guide me to it, and receiving by faith what the Lord there taught me. Respecting this, my book,¹ if the Lord incline your hearts to read it attentively and impartially, may give you full satisfaction.—2. By answering any questions, objections, or scruples you meet with, and are willing to propose, if suited to the bounds of a letter; or, if not, to point out to you books wherein you may find them answered.—Another thing might be mentioned, on which I lay more stress than on both the others, and which I will express in Samuel's words: *God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.*

“ 2. Again² you say, you ‘hope it is possible for a person, engaged in the concerns of the world, so to spend his time in his business, as to be doing his duty both to God and man.’ Assuredly it is. We are each of us to serve God in that station his providence has assigned us; except as we may from good grounds conclude that he would have us change our station. No doubt there are some businesses sinful in themselves; and in most businesses there are many things which an awakened conscience and an enlightened understanding cannot away with: but far be it from me to wish any person to neglect or be slothful in his business: for, if we do our worldly business as we ought, we are therein serving our generation, and glorifying our God. *Whether we eat, or whether we drink, or whatsoever we do,*

¹ The Force of Truth, then lately published.

² Part of this paragraph is inserted in the Life, p. 144. (147.)

we are to do all to the glory of God. However by the way observe, that very few thus manage their worldly business. Of this you may judge. He who thus does his worldly business has it *sanctified by the word of God and prayer.* He goes about it because it is the will of God he should do so. He orders it all in conformity to his revealed will, as far as he knows it, comparing his conduct continually with the holy scriptures. He depends upon the Lord for a blessing in his undertakings and seeks it by prayer. What the Lord gives he receives with thankfulness, as a gift undeserved, as a talent committed to his stewardship, and aims to use it to God's glory:—not as a talent *wrapped in a napkin, or buried in the earth,* with the miser; not as *provision made for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,* with the prodigal; but in temperance, moderation, and a liberal compassionate beneficence. When the Lord crosses him, he submits, and says, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good:* and, when things look dark, he does not murmur or distrust, but says, *The Lord will provide.*—Then

“3. You say, ‘This will, as a moral duty, supply the place of continual prayer.’ First let me ask, Where did a man of your natural sagacity pick up the strange notion of the performance of one duty compensating for the neglect of another? Not from the scriptures: for, if any *keep the whole law and offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* Not from the measures of human government: for, if you break one law, they do not inquire whether you have broken others or

kept them ; but condemn the transgressor of one. Not from your dealings with your neighbours : you would think him a poor customer, who should suppose that by paying for one article he compensated for defrauding you of another. Not from reason : for assuredly we can pay God no more than his due, when we do all that he commands. Even then we are but *unprofitable servants*.—Secondly I answer, that I do not think you are bound to spend so much time in reading, meditation, and prayer, as I am : but assuredly he that lives without prayer lives *without God in the world*. It was not said in vain, *Ye have not because ye ask not*.—But I forbear. Christ's precepts and example need no comment ; and a little time daily (twice a day, I mean,) improved in this employ would bring a blessing upon all you have in your house, on all your hands are employed in, and especially on your precious souls. And it is as impossible to serve God, and taste that happiness, without so doing, as it is to live and thrive without eating. Nor will it hinder your business half so much (though as much more necessary as your soul is worth more than your body,) as your ordinary meals do ; and yet you find time for them.

“ In answer to your questions I fear I have tired you : but one thing I trust I have done, I have kept so clear of controverted points that your conscience will be on my side.

“ Last week we buried our little infant ;¹ who is safely landed on the heavenly shore : and,

¹ Life, p. 126, 128. (129, 131.)

though nature regrets, faith rejoices; and we are resigned. I am greatly afflicted to hear of poor Mr. Webster's death, because it will be so sharp a trial to my sister. May the Lord comfort and support her under it, and sanctify the dispensation to her! And may we all learn to consider our latter end, and to prepare for that time, when all our thoughts of this vain world shall perish!

"I have some thoughts of moving from this place to Olney. It will not be a very important advantage in worldly things: but it will bring an additional care upon me of near two thousand souls. However, the Lord will provide.

"Believe me your very affectionate brother,

"THOMAS SCOTT."

As noticed in the life of my father,¹ his elder sister, Mrs. Webster, about this time lost her husband, after having been married only five years, and was left with two children, and the near prospect of a third; besides having other difficulties to struggle with. These circumstances gave occasion to the following letters.

To Mrs. Webster, Boston.

"DEAR SISTER,

"Weston Underwood,
September 28, 1779.

"BELIEVE me, I do most sincerely pity and condole with you on account of your very great

¹ Page 134. (138.)

loss, of which I received intelligence the other night. Most heartily do I pray God to be your supporter and comforter under this severe stroke of his providence, which I hope, being sanctified by his concurring grace, will, in the upshot, work together for your good: *for we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose.* May the Lord grant to us to be thus *called according to his purpose*, and to give good evidence of our love to him who *first loved us*; and enable us to exercise faith on his promise, that we may under every trying dispensation be prepared to say from our hearts, *It is the Lord*—the wise, righteous, holy, faithful, and merciful Lord, who can do nothing wrong—*let him do what seemeth him good!* I am sensible that it is much easier to give such counsel than to take it; and that, under the pressure of heavy affliction, the soul even of the humble and pious believer is apt to lose sight of God, and its hold on the promise, and to sink into despondency and murmuring thoughts. We are not commanded therefore not to grieve, but not to grieve *as men without hope.* Hence, with the most sympathizing feeling of that heavy burden which the Lord hath laid upon you, I would only drop a few hints on this occasion, earnestly beseeching the Lord to direct me to suitable words, that I may speak *in season*, and to make them instrumental to your consolation and benefit, by his Holy Spirit.

“ 1. Then, may the Lord help you to call to mind, that, though man be *born to trouble as the*

sparks fly upward, yet affliction springeth not out of the dust, but is all and every part of it the appointment of God; without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, and by whom even the hairs of our head are all numbered. This consideration should silence our complainings, teach us to submit to his sovereign pleasure; to *be still and know that he is God*, and to answer all our hard thoughts and objections with Paul's words, *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?*

“Then, 2. may the Lord enable you to believe that he *doth not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men*; but always acts consistently with his perfections; and is wise, and just, and good in his most mysterious dispensations; hath always good and sufficient reason for what he doth: and, though, as sovereign, he doth not condescend to *give account of his matters* in particular, yet in general we know that in all he is intent on displaying the glory of his perfections, and promoting the salvation of his people.

“Then, 3. it comes to be considered, what is the grand reason and cause why a just, holy, wise, and gracious God does so order it, that this life should be one continued series of disappointment, vanity, vexation, sorrows, and losses: that all our comforts are alloyed with sorrow, all our sweets mingled with bitterness. Sin is the cause of all. We are all sinners; have all, though not all alike, transgressed with continual transgressions the perfect law of God: and, because we are sinners, therefore we are sufferers: and he

that hath sinned the least hath deserved the greatest of temporal afflictions, yea infinitely more. To them who live and die impenitent and unbelieving, these prove only *the beginnings of sorrows*: but to them who truly fear God they are changed in their nature, become chastisements and blessings.

“Hence, 4. it comes in our way to consider the tendency of these afflictions. They teach us to humble ourselves as sinners in the sight of God, and to acknowledge that it is *of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not*. They teach us to say: *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. Should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?* This stirs us up to true repentance.—Then they teach us experimentally that *all is vanity and vexation of spirit*: that the world, and its dearest and most reasonable comforts, can afford us nothing but bitterness, if we set our hearts upon it. They remind us that we want a better portion, more certain and durable: and this, weaning us from the love of the world, and disposing us to choose God for our portion, will turn all our affections and desires into another channel, and incline us *to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*; to mind *the one thing needful*; and *to labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life*.—Then, if sanctified to us, they teach us our need of better comforters than the world affords: and this endears to us the word of God, and its precious promises and cheering assurances; and

makes us prize the throne of grace, where God is placed bowing down his ear to our prayers, and to which, through the atoning blood of Christ, and his prevailing intercession for sinners, we have boldness of access, may unburden our spirits, make known our requests, cast away our cares, pour out our sorrows, and confidently wait an answer of peace; assured that, *like as a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful to them that fear him.*—When afflictions have this effect, though grievous, they are very beneficial: and most of the saints in glory have cause to bless God that they were afflicted, adding, *Before I was afflicted I went wrong.*

“ I have much more to say, but must draw to a conclusion. I hope you will *not despise the chastening of the Lord*; and I pray that you may *not faint now you are rebuked of him; for whom he loveth he chasteneth.* Do not smother your heavy sorrows in your own breast; much less give way to murmuring or complaining words, or desponding thoughts: but carry these complaints and fears to a throne of grace; and, having renewed (as we all have need to do) your repentance and prayers for pardon, *commit your way unto the Lord*; seek to him for consolation; search more and more into his precious word; and remember who hath said, (Jeremiah xlix. 11.) *Leave thy fatherless children with me, and let thy widows trust in me.*—Death hath also made a breach in *our* family: but, bless God, the stroke has been very gentle to what your's has been. Our youngest boy is dead and happy. Assure

yourself of our best love, and joint prayers for the recovery of your health, the return of comfort to your mind, and your best welfare.

“Your’s affectionately,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

To Mrs. Webster, Boston.

“DEAR SISTER,

“Weston Underwood,
December 15, 1779.

“I DO not know whether I have not been guilty of a fault in not answering your last letter earlier, as assuredly I ought, at such a time as this must needs be with you, to do whatever little is in my power to promote your comfort and support under your troubles. However, though a variety of engagements, and too great a propensity to indulge indolence, have hitherto prevented my writing to you, yet I have not been forgetful of you, as the Lord knoweth, who I trust hath heard, and in his own time will answer, my prayers in your behalf: although I do not deny that there is something that I long and pray for, which I do not perceive that the Lord hath yet bestowed upon you. But, as you say, and I am bound to believe, that you do sincerely desire to serve the Lord, in that way (I trust you mean,) which in his holy word he hath revealed and appointed as alone acceptable; so I hope and believe that some time or other he will make known to you somewhat, as taught in the sacred scriptures, which you have not hitherto discovered: nor will I drop the assured persuasion that one day we shall be

of one mind in most of those things wherein we now differ, as you observe. But, as I have no expectation that this will be brought about in the way of argumentation and dispute, which generally do too much ruffle the passions to leave the mind open to an impartial reception of the truth; and rather expecting that, under the guidance and secret teaching of the Holy Spirit, gradually opening your understanding to understand the scriptures, and discovering more and more what passes in your own heart, and what is revealed in the Bible, you will seem to discover it of yourself; so I would there leave the matter, only wishing and praying you to continue an attentive reading of the scriptures, and to frequent the throne of grace in prayer; and especially praying to be delivered from prejudice, error, and ignorance, to be enlightened with the knowledge of the truth, and made acquainted with the *unsearchable riches of Christ*. As to the rest, I do not wish to interfere with you, but would leave the event to the Lord; only not forgetting to beseech him *to remember you with the favour which he beareth to his chosen people, and to visit you with his salvation*.

“I wish a good deal for an opportunity of sending a parcel of the books which I have published, and which I suppose you have not seen. I only beg you to read the book when you receive it without prejudice, remembering that in former days you had no contemptible opinion of the author’s understanding; praying at the same time that *the Father of lights*, the Giver of *every good and perfect gift*, would be pleased to make it ma-

nifest to each of us, whether of the two, you or I, do mistake the meaning of his revealed word, that we may not perish in such deceivings.

“ I truly condole with you in the loss upon loss which you have sustained, in being bereaved of our very friendly uncle Jackson ; for whom I myself have always had a very sincere esteem and affection, and doubt not you have had a very great loss in him. Death hath lately been so busy in our family, that I feel surprised that I am still alive, and dare not either presume on length of life myself, or lean upon the bruised reeds of creature-comforts, such dying worms as we all are. And indeed, though naturally of a disposition sufficiently susceptible of all the tender affections, stroke upon stroke, one bereaving providence after another, together with the reflections thereby suggested concerning the vanity of the world, and the uncertainty and vexation attending all things here below, has tended exceedingly to prepare my mind for such things, and rather introduced a desire to be made indifferent about all earthly things.—I cannot however attain to this. The difficulty is, how to love, and take pleasure in, and long to be useful to, our friends while with us, and yet to be made willing to resign them when the Lord is pleased to call for them. This is what would be exactly right, but what the Lord does not expect *wholly* of us in this our state of infirmity ; only that we *sorrow not as men that have no hope* : for, *like as a father pitieth his children, so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him*.—One trial there is however, that I do, with a most cowardly distrustful

fear, shrink back from the thoughts of.¹ I thank you for your prayer respecting it: but the Lord will provide. My great comfort is, that I assuredly believe that I have one unchangeable, eternal, ever-present, all-sufficient friend, who hath said, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, even the God of all consolation.* Though he break our poor cisterns, it is only that we may not be kept from coming to the fountain, *to drink of his pleasures as out of a river:* when he causes our gourds to wither, it is in order that we may make him our refuge and hiding-place in trouble. May we be enabled to take him for our God in Christ Jesus, and give ourselves to be his people; and in every time of trouble to consider that he is with us, knows our sorrows, hears our sighs and prayers, *puts our tears into his bottle,* and is both able and willing to make all *work together for good to them that love him, whom he hath called according to his purpose.*

“ I do indeed consider your circumstances as very distressing, and such as peculiarly call for sympathy and compassion: but, alas! we may say of ourselves and of one another, *Miserable comforters are we all!* I hope I shall not forget to beseech the Almighty to be your comforter, and that we shall daily join in that request.—Please to let somebody write a line to inform us when you are brought to bed. Do not give way to gloomy fears or desponding thoughts, but cast your care upon the Lord; and remember that, though

¹ No doubt a loss corresponding to that which his sister had suffered—of his nearest and dearest earthly connexion.

your troubles are too heavy for yourself to bear, yet, if the Lord *put under his everlasting arms*, his strength will be best manifested in your weakness. Believe me your ever affectionate brother.

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

It is often delightful, when we can do it, to trace what St. James calls “the end of the Lord,”—the issue of his painful dispensations towards his servants. How often is it found to be “pityfulness and tender mercy,” where it seemed at the time to be most the reverse! In the Memoir of Mr. Cecil, it is said: “It is worthy of remark, that during her travail with this child of her old age, his mother’s heart was overwhelmed with sorrow. Her years, and other circumstances not necessary to be here mentioned, raised in her mind the most terrific apprehensions. Yet this child was the comfort and honour of her latter days!” Thus in the instance before us. It was felt at the time as a severe aggravation of Mrs. Webster’s loss, that she was to be the mother of a child which should be fatherless from its birth. But so it was, that this child alone survived to be the support and comfort of her old age! I notice the fact, in case these papers should find any reader whose circumstances may render it a source of appropriate consolation.

“ Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace :
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.”

To Mrs. Webster, Boston.

“DEAR SISTER,

“ Weston Underwood,
January 15, 1780.

“ I HAVE just received your letter, and, having an hour to spare, have determined to answer it immediately; hoping that the Lord will direct me to somewhat that may be made comfortable and useful to you. Assure yourself you are much in my mind, and much in my prayers; and I should be exceedingly rejoiced and thankful, if I could be in any respect made instrumental to your support and consolation under your complicated trials. You know not my heart when you suppose I shall censure you with sharpness for finding your mind full of grief and care, and your heart of anxiety under your present circumstances. On the contrary the strugglings which you appear to make against distrust, and your acknowledgments of the goodness of the Lord to you, notwithstanding the heavy heart-rending sorrows which he in his providence has laid upon you, persuade me that you are not utterly in your experience a stranger to that conflict between grace and sin in the heart, which is the peculiar distinguishing mark of a true Christian. My dear sister, you are greatly mistaken in supposing me propense to blame, and severe in censuring others for not coming up to that perfection which I know and allow to be our duty and our happiness. Alas! with shame and confusion of face I am daily confessing before the throne of grace, that, *when*

I would do good, evil is present with me: that, whilst I allow, and approve of, and delight in the law of God, after the inner man, I am so drawn aside by my indwelling corruptions, the snares of the world, and Satan's temptations, that, were it not for my assured belief that I have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins, I could have no confidence towards God, being condemned by my own heart. In short, I can do no other than allow that my best days, dispositions, and services, are all defective and defiled, and need to be washed in that fountain which the Lord hath opened for sin and for uncleanness.—Certainly, should you ask what is your duty and your wisdom under your present troubles, I should answer, That you should take no anxious unbelieving care for the morrow, what you or your's shall eat or drink, or wherewithal you shall be clothed: that you should cast all your care upon God; be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make your requests known unto God; seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and commit your way unto him, who never faileth them that put their trust in him. But, should you answer that, though you know this to be your duty, though you desire to act thus, and do in part attempt it; yet, nevertheless, anxious cares, and worldly thoughts, and mournful considerations, whether you will or not, frequently crowd into your mind, distract and discompose you, and even accompany and trouble you when addressing yourself to prayer, and the reading of

the scriptures ; I should not wonder, nor censure, nor think you for that reason *peculiarly* blameworthy. Sinful these things are, deficiencies and defilements in our services, that need *the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus*, our great high priest, who ever liveth to make intercession for his people ; but they are no other than what every sincere and humble Christian in the world will acknowledge himself to be guilty of ; and what, under far less trials, I too much experience ; which makes me place no confidence in such poor sinful services, but trust wholly to what Christ hath done for me—he having been *made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. Our comfort is, that *we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin ; and who suffered being tempted that he might be able to succour them that are tempted* : a Saviour who *loved his people, and washed them from their sins in his own blood*, and who has a fellow-feeling for us in all our sufferings : a Father who *pitieth us, and knoweth whereof we are made, and remembereth that we are dust*.—I only therefore would wish you to strive and pray continually against the workings of unbelief ; when your heart is overwhelmed, to pour out your complaints, and spread your sorrows (as Hezekiah did Sennacherib's letter,) before the Lord : and I doubt not that God, *who comforteth those that are cast down*, will both provide for your outward wants, support you under your troubles, and, by his abundant consolation, in

due time turn your mourning into joy.—Indeed your letter, though written in somewhat of a complaining strain, and not without some suspicions that I should disapprove it, is the most comfortable letter I have ever received from you, since my views of religion were changed; and it leaves me little doubt that the Lord is leading you, in the same gradual manner that he led me, to a spiritual and experimental acquaintance with the truth as it is in Jesus. I discern an increasing earnestness in matters of religion, a more tender and awakened conscience, a growing conviction of unworthiness, and somewhat of a greater fearfulness of being mistaken. As to the rest, I am in no hurry: the word of God I recommend to your daily reading; and oh may the Lord stir you up to frequent the throne of grace, and, without confining yourself wholly to the words of another, now and then to pour out the genuine desires of your heart, in your own words, for the teaching and guidance of his Holy Spirit! I hope we do not, shall not differ essentially: I only say that there are some things, which I doubt not the Lord will teach you by and by, (as he sent Peter to Cornelius *to speak unto him words whereby he and his house might be saved*,) which, though sincerely serving God, you are hitherto mistaken about; and other things I believe myself, which perhaps you may never believe in this world, and yet be saved for all that.

“You say you are ‘afraid I shall say that unless you be converted you cannot be saved.’ I do say so, and am sure of it: and saith not the Lord the same? *Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye be*

converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—But what if I add, that I see dawning hopes that this necessary work is already wrought in your soul; and that the time is coming, and not far distant, when your own inward experience shall explain to you the meaning of this and several other expressions of the New Testament to the same effect, better than any commentators in the world?—*for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*—However, one would think there was nothing so mysterious and hard to be understood under this easy word. Let me drop a hint upon it. Man by nature is given up to *the love of the world, and the things that are in the world*: these he pursues and longs after, and seeks his happiness from them. This is to be *carnally minded*. Some after a season are convinced of the world's vanity, and are led to desire a better portion. Their eyes are enlightened: they are undeceived respecting this universal infatuation: like the prodigal, they *come to themselves*, and discover the folly and madness of a rational immortal being seeking happiness from things which *perish in the using*, and which must shortly be left for ever: they discern that the eternal and all-sufficient God is the only suitable and satisfying portion and happiness: they thenceforth set themselves to seek his favour as the *one thing needful*, and look for their happiness from him. *There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me!*—This is conversion: being

turned from seeking our happiness from the world and self, to seeking it from God only.—Generally this change is preceded by a deep conviction of our lost state by nature and practice, a sense of our perishing need of pardoning mercy, and a discovery of the glorious person, gracious work, and offices of Jesus Christ, and an application to him, according to his invitation, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Sometimes these views follow after this inward change, as in me ; and some are left much in the dark all their lives, of whose sincerity and salvation I have no doubt.—When this change has taken place in our source of happiness, our desires and ends, aims, hopes, fears, joys, sorrows, converse, and conduct too are changed: *Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.* This is conversion ; and I trust you have experienced something of it, and that it will be more and more evident to your mind every day.

“Your affectionate brother,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

To Mrs. Webster, Leicester.

“DEAR SISTER,

“Chapel Street,
March 16, 1796.

“IN the midst of my urgent and numerous employments, I cannot be satisfied without writing a few lines to assure you that I am very glad to hear from you, and of your welfare ; though a variety of circumstances concur in making me a worse correspondent than formerly. In general I find my writing so much injures my health, and wears down my spirits, more than all my other

exertions : yet I have great reason to think that I am far more useful in this line than in any other ; and am therefore reluctant to slacken my hand in that respect : for to be in some measure useful, in a mischievous world, seems the only end for which life is desirable, when a man has got a good hope through grace of happiness in a future state.

“My brother writes long letters to you about peace, war, and politics : to me he does not write more than once or twice a year, at most, and very short letters. Indeed I do not wish him to write to me about such things as you mention ; for our sentiments would not coincide, and I have little hope of convincing him. I fear these speculations are a very great snare to him, and greatly prevent his attention to *the one thing needful*, both in respect of himself and his family : and, at last, were he ever so right, his opinions, reasonings, or disputings, will sway just nothing with those that have and will have the management of public affairs. I have no doubt that rulers of all sorts are, and always have been, too propense to war : and, when I am made privy counsellor, or even preaching chaplain to his Majesty, his ministers, or the parliament, I will tell them my opinions on those subjects. Till then I may as well hold my tongue ; except as I declare general truths from the pulpit and the press.—Yet, after all, I question whether either I or he, if we were constituted dictators, would know how to get out of the present war, without ensuring a worse ; and it is easier to find fault, or give directions, than it would be to realize our own rules, in the circumstances referred to. It would therefore be far better for us to take no-

tice of the hand of God lifted up against a guilty nation, than to quarrel with instruments of any kind : and to consider our own ways, confess our own sins, and pour out our prayers for deliverance and peace, than to speculate on other men's conduct, who have reasons for doing what they do, which we are not aware of. I have enough to do in this way ; and therefore I am no party man : but I am confident that, could the more respectable opposition-men get into power, they would be forced to carry on the plans of the present ministry in many things, for a time, under the varnish of some new colouring : and, as to the revolutionists as I love peace, I say, From such men, good Lord deliver us ! The best way is to pray God to give our rulers wisdom and grace, and to do our duty in our station ; and to leave the rest to the Lord."

" *Chapel Street, March 21, 1797.*" After noticing the death of a distant relation :—" I have grown more backward of late to obtrude myself on company where I suspect I am not wanted ; and my mind is so conversant with thoughts of eternity, that I am much pained when I see those, who in some respects are dear to me, in a condition which I deem most perilous ; especially if I can find no opportunity of trying to set them right. Such intercourse therefore I decline as painful and useless. Sometimes we accuse ourselves needlessly, when in fact we have done all that we could with propriety."

I insert this passage because there are minds which need the relief it may afford them. In

general, however, it may be feared, our dangers lie on the opposite side, which is much the worse extreme of the two: we feel too little, and attempt less than we might do "with propriety:" and much would I deprecate, as the writer also would have done, any abuse of the passage to soothe a selfish remissness of this kind.

A letter is inserted in the *Life*,¹ addressed to Mrs. Webster when she was threatened with the loss of her second and only remaining daughter: the following was written when this loss had actually occurred.

To Mrs. Webster, Leicester.

"DEAR SISTER,

"Chapel Street,
July 20, 1797.

"I CAN only repeat, in other language, the sentiments contained in my wife's letter; and yet I am not willing (though much engaged and rather indisposed,) to let the parcel go off without a few lines. Were I to view the event, of which your last letter gave us information, in an abstract manner, apart from those feelings which have their use in this world, I should consider it as peculiarly joyful, and matter of congratulation. You are exceedingly honoured, and your children highly favoured, nor could more have been wished for on *their* account; though we might have been desirous of their living in this world, as in a prison, in order to recommend the clemency and the service of their reconciled Lord to their fellow

¹ Pages 345, 346. (354.)

sinners, and in various ways to be useful to others. Yet, after all, you are bereaved, and nature must grieve; and even grace will only moderate and regulate your sorrow, without extinguishing it. I trust, however, you will not give way to the romantic kind of impatience called *indulging* grief; which, in reality, differs little from Jonah's saying, *I do well to be angry even unto death*. Even when the Lord, in his righteous sovereignty, takes from us those who are dear in the bonds of nature, but of whose future condition we cannot but entertain many uneasy apprehensions, submission is our bounden duty; and prayer for grace to enable us to submit, our proper business; with all other suitable means of turning the thoughts to other subjects, and from that which can only distress and tempt us, without any possibility of altering the divine appointments; which are doubtless wise, holy, and righteous, however they may appear to us. But, when we are deprived of those concerning whom we have scriptural confidence that they *sleep in Jesus*, the grieving of nature is so counterpoised by the joy of hope, that it may be expected, after a while, that we should not only submit to the will of God, but feel ourselves peculiarly thankful for such special mercies. When I think of the unnumbered dangers with which the world abounds, and the very small proportion of young persons who are seriously disposed; I think also with great satisfaction of the three children that I have lost, and who, I verily believe, are now in heaven: and though, for the sake of others, I rejoice perhaps more sensibly on account of some that survive,

yet there is an anxiety and deduction felt there, from which the joy on the other account is free. Yet, at the time, I felt the loss, especially of one, very painfully. And, indeed, I can hardly conceive that we should be properly stimulated to do our duty to our children, if we had not that kind of affection for them which makes the loss very painful, though our best judgment sees abundant cause for gratitude.—Your case, it is true, will necessarily be attended with peculiar sensations; as you have lost your companion as well as your child. . . . Yet you may hope for peculiar supports: and I doubt not that, in time, the grace and consolations of God will soothe your sorrows, and a sort of melancholy sweetness will remain, seriously pleasing, frequently engaging your reflections, and issuing in grateful praises, and anticipation of that joyful meeting we are taught to expect with our relatives who have departed in the Lord. Your pain and anguish will gradually decrease; your satisfaction and gratitude increase continually. . . . We shall be glad to see you, and to do every thing in our power for your solace and comfort. I send a few books which I have lately published. One copy you will give, with my love, to Mr. Robinson, and dispose of the others as you have opportunity.

“ I remain, with great sincerity,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

V.

LETTERS TO A NIECE (HIS BROTHER'S DAUGHTER)
WHO HAD SPENT SOME TIME AT OLNEY.

1787—1788.

“DEAR NIECE,

“Chapel-street.
January 27, 1787.

“I SUPPOSE my sister¹ has received before this time a pretty long letter, which I sent a few days before we received the parcel. I was indeed too dilatory in answering; but I had many peculiar hindrances. I was just at that time engaged about a sermon that I have lately published,² which was occasioned by many unpleasant circumstances, and produced me considerable employment. Truth in all things, and especially in divine things, lies in the middle between the extremes; but either extreme may accommodate the pride and lusts of men. Therefore men are fond of extremes, and when a man is reduced from one, he is naturally prone (like the pendulum,) to vibrate as far into the other. Thus high churchmen sometimes vibrate into stiff dissenters, self-righteous pharisees into antinomians, and confident Arminians into rigid Calvinists. This is human nature. But true grace disposes a man to caution. Under the divine teaching, he trem-

¹ See above, p. 61.

² “On Election and Final Perseverance:” see Life, p. 233, 234. (240.)

bles at every step lest Satan should seduce him : he recedes from his principles in general gradually, and always with some degree of moderation : and values no notions further than he experiences their influence on his heart and conduct. Let this observation introduce my subject.

“ My lot has been for some time, in this contentious age, so to steer between the disputing parties, as to be obnoxious to both, and pleasing to neither. The churchmen dislike me because I condescend so far to the dissenters ; and the dissenters are not pleased that I do not quit the church. But especially I am obnoxious (so far as my littleness is known,) to the self-righteous and Arminians, because I will preach the doctrines of grace ; and to the supralapsarians and antinomians, because I oppose the abuse of those doctrines, and insist upon the necessity of holiness of heart, and fruitfulness in good works. For the whole truth is so opposite to the pride of man on the one hand, and to the love of the world on the other, that neither party can bear it. Man may be prevailed on to sacrifice his pleasure or his profit to his pride, or his pride to his love of pleasure ; that is, one idol to another ; but nothing except grace can make him sacrifice *all* of them to the Lord Jesus.—You know what effect my ministry produced at Olney : the same, in great measure, has been the effect in London. I seem to myself like the heavy axe among the carpenter’s tools, which, when it has been employed in hewing one knotty block, must hew another and another to the end ; and never is to be employed in any other work—being unfit for the

office of a plane or a chisel. I was aware of this, in some measure, when I came hither; but I deemed myself called in God's providence to this place: and therefore, at length, I accepted the proposal, though not without telling the governors my apprehensions. Notwithstanding the influence of party, and the prevalence of a superficial, notional, and erroneous religion, for some time I had more acceptance and less opposition than I expected: but, going on in my downright, plain, alarming, inviting, distinguishing, practical strain, a secret dislike was working in the minds of several: and, while the opposite party were watching their opportunity, some circumstances gave them the wished-for occasion: the cry of Arminianism was propagated: they who could not bear the practical preaching, for reasons too visible, laid hold of this clamour, and insinuated prejudices into the minds of numbers who could not judge for themselves; and almost suddenly my congregation was reduced to about half the number, and I verily thought I should have been driven from my post. At that crisis, having given previous notice, I penned, preached, and published a sermon entitled, *The Doctrines, &c.* It was very well received by the ministers and professors in general in town, and had some considerable influence in the congregation: but the occasion was too favourable, and too assiduously improved, and prejudices and suspicions had sunk too deep to be generally removed. The views I avowed concerning the sufficiency of the death of Christ¹

¹ Life, p. 253 (260) and 646 (664); and below, letter to Dr. Ryland, dated Jan. 20, 1787.

revived the clamour; and many have withdrawn, and I am generally unpopular. However the governors are steadily my friends, and I have many others, and I am assured that I am useful; and the post is important: the cause I know is that of truth, of righteousness, and of God. Much attention is excited; and a successful testimony cannot fail of being extensively beneficial, and introductory to further usefulness: and, even though I should be driven out, if it be only for faithfulness and firmness, united with prudence and meekness, all must be well. But it is probable that I shall be able to maintain my post.— In the mean time, besides my congregation and occasional preaching, I visit when I please, and as I please, the patients; where I address five hundred or more, in the course of the year, of the most profligate characters in the kingdom, in my plain manner; and cannot but hope for good. When I have an opportunity I will send you some sermons, and another letter, which shall have another subject than self. Yet you will know how to draw benefit from this subject. The power of godliness alone can profit us, or excite the opposition of Satan and the world. I can only add that we are all tolerably well, and join in love to you all, parents and children. Wishing and praying for every blessing to you,

“I am your affectionate friend and relation,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

“ DEAR SUSAN,

“ Chapel Street,
June 21, 1787.

“ I WAS in Bucks¹ when your letter arrived, and therefore did not see it till above a week after. Since my return I have had several engagements, and seem to have embraced the first leisure hour to write a line to you. As I have mentioned Bucks, I would just inform you that the seed I was so long sowing there was not all thrown away; nay, much seems now to be springing up, especially among the young people at Ravenstone. I trust the religious people there are of the right stamp; and that they are saying every one to his neighbour and to his brother, *Come, let us go up unto the house of the Lord*, that we may learn and walk in his ways: and religion seems to sink deeper into their hearts, appear more in their lives, spread more in their families; and I hope it will descend to their posterity. Multitudes appear inclined to hear plain practical preaching, and there seems a great preparation of heart for receiving the gospel. They have two young pious ministers; one at Ravenstone, a Mr. Bull, a relation of Mr. Bull of Newport, who learned his views of the gospel under my roof, at Olney; the other Mr. Postlethwaite, who succeeded me in the curacy of Olney. Very few have turned dissenters: but most of them have taken my advice, to keep together, and edify one another. They are all satisfied I did right in coming to town.—The fire at Olney was very dreadful at the time, and one poor man lost his life instan-

¹ Life, p. 242 and 258. (248 and 265.)

taneously by the fall of a chimney: but the loss of property is nothing so great as one would imagine. Scarcely one of my people was among the sufferers. Though I cannot say he got the living by my means, I certainly did mention Mr. Tyler to Mr. Wilberforce, and informed him of his present precarious situation, and represented it as a very good thing to fix him in the neighbourhood. He answered that, if he thought so, he would mention him to the Lord Chancellor; which he did, and the living was given him.¹ But he was mentioned to Mr. W. by some others, especially Mr. Milner of Hull. If he be faithful and useful I shall be satisfied and thankful. My situation here has amazing difficulties; but I trust I shall triumph over all. The body of professors are as shy of me, or averse to me, as they were at Olney. Most of the ministers, though they seem to allow my principles, and to avow the same, are yet afraid or averse to my preaching for them. My blunt, plain speaking (*right forwards*, as you used to term it²;) lays me under the censure of rash, imprudent, or even conceited and self-sufficient, because I out with all at once which they more gradually and cautiously inculcate. I often think that perhaps I am wrong: and yet I seem to have example on my side throughout the scripture; and the effect of my ministry, stated and occasional, in other places,

¹ This refers to the living of Braytoft, my father's native place, which his brother wished him to ask for for himself, but which he thus contributed to obtain for the Rev. Mr. Tyler.

² Life, p. 446, 665. (458, 684.)

encourages me to hope I shall gradually get ground here. In short, had I been more cautious at first coming, I might have escaped some crosses ; but it is now too late : and I hope, by this very means, if I am but enabled to act constantly and consistently, the more extensive and durable effects will follow. Though many of the governors who brought me hither are lukewarm, and are frightened because so many leave us, yet others are raised up ; the income of the chapel is no less ; that of the hospital more than formerly ; and my congregations are not much diminished ; whilst the zeal of the opposite party fills the chapel exceedingly when Mr. De C. preaches. This party-work, and the censures, and bad appearances are the worst part of the business : but it is the cause of truth and holiness, and I must abide by it."

He then adverts to the Lock Asylum,¹ shortly to be opened, and adds :—" I have had in my house five weeks"—waiting for admission into the Asylum—" as vile a wretch as can be conceived of nineteen years of age, who seems truly penitent : another I have just taken in ; some I have got to service ; and several return to their friends : and most weeks there are some whom it is grieving to turn into the streets.—You will understand that I want your earnest prayers for a blessing on this and other designs.

" Your affectionate uncle,

" THOMAS SCOTT."

¹ Life, p. 239. (245.)

“ DEAR SUSAN,

“ Chapel Street,
November 13, 1787.

“ NOTHING but a continued series of engagements could have occasioned my delay in answering your last letter, which in some respects was pleasing, in all interesting. But the institution,¹ to which the pamphlet referred, was opened before I received your letter, and has been the source of so much work, and so many anxieties and mortifications, as it is difficult to express or imagine; so that I have scarcely time to eat my meals, or read any thing but my Bible, (which I am always reading and expounding,) or write any thing but what relates to it.² Yet, in the midst of all, I hope and believe the harvest will be glorious; many plucked as brands out of the burning; although many baffle all our efforts, and *return to their wallowing in the mire.*

“ For all this labour the Lord is to be my paymaster; for I have not one farthing salary. Taking it altogether it appears evidently to have been suggested by him; who encouraged the proposal, raised up friends, removed obstacles, and I trust will crown all with his blessing.—Twenty-eight have been admitted: twenty remain upon our hands, many of whom appear very hopeful. Of six more we can give at present a good account: the Lord give them perseverance! One died, I believe, a true penitent: one is married, but no true penitent, I fear: of one I stand in

¹ The Asylum.

² This was about seven weeks before he commenced writing his Commentary.

doubt: the rest have disappointed us.—Enough of this. Pray earnestly for success.

“My situation seems rather more encouraging; and probably the hospital and asylum will fix me in the chapel; and in time other doors may be opened. Indeed I not unfrequently preach occasional sermons in different parts of London; and I have reason to believe that all the dispute upon the business has already been productive of much good. Many ministers, I am sure, preach in a more awakening, distinguishing, guarded, and practical manner than they used to do. To this a society of which I am admitted a member seems likely to contribute. Indeed, whether I hear the Arminians or Calvinists, I seem to find the same fault; and the difference between the *zealots* of both parties seems trivial, compared with the difference of both from the word of God. Both keep the moral character of God much out of sight; both narrow the broad law of God; both have slight thoughts of the evil of sin; both are defective on humiliation for sin, and abhorrence of it; both make much too little a matter of renovation and sanctification; both place their standard of personal holiness too low—though one fancy they have got up to it, and the other seem afraid of pressing towards it; both lay too much stress on impressions, &c. &c., and too little on newness of heart and life. But let us not forget our principles; but ask ourselves, who made us to differ? Humility, meekness, patience, are especially consistent with the scriptural practical view of the doctrines of grace; and we should be careful to avoid *the appearance of evil*. We may

pray for those we cannot do any thing else for. —The gospel can teach us to accommodate ourselves to any possible situation in which the providence of God casts our lot, and to behave well, and be cheerful in it: and a few weeks witnessing the abominations I am surrounded with, would make you thankful to see even the least appearance of any thing like the fear of God in any belonging to us. Your situation is not of your own choosing, that I can see, and, being your cross, will not be your detriment.

“You will receive with this a few sermons, which I have lately published, preached at Olney:¹ perhaps you will receive some from Boston previously: but no matter: dispose of them as you think best. The people *about* Olney go on well in the midst of changes; and many show the truth of the doctrine they have heard by their lives: pray for them. I remain with prayers and good wishes for you all,

“Your affectionate uncle,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

“DEAR SUSAN,

“Chapel Street,
September 16, 1788.

“You must not attribute my long silence to any thing but the multiplicity of my engagements; especially with my pen. By my utmost exertions I can scarcely keep on to supply a number per week of the Bible—to finish it in the manner I would: nay for these three or four weeks past I have

¹ On Growth in Grace: Life, p. 242. (248.)

lost ground considerably, having been very poorly in health, though I am now better: and I consider it as my duty to let no number go forth less clear, distinct, and exact, than I could make it with proper diligence. Therefore company, correspondence, and almost every thing (preaching *in season and out of season* excepted,) must here give place. The publication gets forward in sale and in repute; and I trust will be useful: but by one means or other I have got a sad character even among my brethren; who look upon me as a man ambitious of the honour of being talked of, and of setting the world right, and reforming ministers, &c. &c. They *judge according to appearance*, but the Lord *judges righteous judgment*.

“Your last letter gave me sensible pleasure in every way. I can only say, Go forward, and the Lord prosper you! Do not forget to pray to the Lord to give me humility, patience, meekness, wisdom, perseverance, and success: for what God hath taught me I certainly desire to impart to others, and to all others, of every class and character, if it were possible, all over the world. But whether in this I seek the glory of God, or my own honour, is best known to him who *searcheth the heart* of man.....

“I remain your truly affectionate uncle,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

VI.

LETTERS TO MR. J. CAMPBELL, EDINBURGH—NOW
THE REV. J. CAMPBELL, OF LONDON.¹

1789—1793.

IN introducing these letters I shall take the liberty of prefixing the greater part of that, with which Mr. C. favoured me, on transmitting them—believing that it will be interesting to the reader.

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“Kingsland, near London,
February 17, 1823.

“I HAVE enclosed copies of all the letters I am able to find, which I received from your late worthy father, divested of their mere business parts. I know there were others; but though, since my return from Africa, I have spent my leisure hours during some weeks in burning old papers and letters, I have not discovered any of those of your father’s which I miss.—The reading of his letters regarding his severe asthma reminded me of hearing him preach one morning at the Lock, when he was more fit for a pillow than a pulpit, in point of health; but no creature could have discovered it while he was preaching. I

¹ Visitor of the London Missionary Society’s establishments in Southern Africa.

dined with him: and after dinner we set off on foot to walk part of the way to Bread Street, where he was to preach in the afternoon. A shower of rain caused all the hackney coaches to be engaged: while walking along Piccadilly, he was gasping for breath, and declared he could proceed no further, but must sit down on the pavement. That instant an unhired coach appeared at a distance: he waved his handkerchief, exclaiming, 'There's a coach, and God has sent it!' Great was the gratitude he expressed on taking his seat in that coach. We arrived just in time at the church, when he preached a most searching sermon, from *What do ye more than others?* The meagre attendance at the church showed that few of the neighbours were aware where the best gold was to be had; or that they were more captivated by manner than matter; by *how* it was said, than *what* was said.

"On a visit to London I was expressing a great desire to see the late Mr. Charles of Bala, with whom I had corresponded for three years, concerning a remarkable revival which had taken place under his ministry. Mr. Charles happening to be in town at the time, your father kindly took me to Lady Ann Erskine's, where he resided. We spent there two happy hours. Your father requested Mr. C. to favour us with a brief outline of the circumstances which led to the remarkable revival at Bala, and the surrounding region, its progress, &c. He did so, for upwards of an hour. On our leaving him, your father said, Did you not observe the singular humility of Mr. Charles, in the narrative that he gave? never having once

mentioned himself, though he was the chief actor and instrument in the whole matter.

“ I have mentioned these few facts, not knowing whether you had a niche for such things or not. They have cost me no trouble putting down, so no harm can be done, though they should prove useless to you ; though sometimes little things are rendered valuable by the greatness of the character to which they are attached. Should I discover any other letters I shall send them.

“ I am your's sincerely,

“ JOHN CAMPBELL.”

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Chapel Street,
June 15, 1789.

“ IT gave me real pleasure to receive a letter from you, with an account of your safe arrival at home ; and I should be glad to write a more full answer to it, but that I am poorly in health, and have more to do than I can get through.

“ I am obliged to you for mentioning my pamphlet among your acquaintance, and for attempting to disperse it : if it be in any way useful I shall rejoice. The comment mentioned in the Force of Truth was directly Socinian : it was published in weekly numbers in folio, about the year 1762 or 1763 ; and was said to be written by a society of gentlemen. It made altogether five moderate sized volumes. There was a considerable degree of specious reasoning, and ingenuity in the management of their arguments, but it seems to me that it did not spread very wide ; for I have not met with more than one copy of it

since I entered into orders, and I find but few people who are acquainted with it.

“ In general I know little afterwards about the patients whom I speak to in the hospital; but a few instances I have met with, which have convinced me that my labour was not in vain: and the new institution, which is annexed to the hospital, for the reception of penitent female patients, promises considerable usefulness, if it be not deranged. But I meet with many difficulties in my situation, and it is doubtful whether I shall continue long in it. However, all things are in the hands of the Lord; his wisdom, power, and love are infinite; *his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure*; and his cause shall triumph over all opposition: and all who cordially favour it shall be ere long *more than conquerors, through him who loved them*.

“ Desiring an interest in your prayers; and sincerely begging of the Lord to multiply mercy, grace, and peace to you, and all in your part of the world, and indeed everywhere, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,

“ I am,

“ Your sincere friend and servant,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Chapel Street,
April 3, 1791.

“ I AM quite ashamed to address a line to you after my long silence: but, if you had known all the hurry of engagements that I have been in, as well as the variety of my inward agitations,

you would be disposed to forgive me. I have enclosed a few sermons that I have published, without my name, on occasion of the death of a much valued friend, whom you have often heard of, Mr. Thornton.

“ Hitherto the Lord hath helped us ; I trust all is working together for good ; the bitter as well as the sweet ; and I find much to be contained in the words of Deut. viii. 2. suited to my feelings and my whole case. May all we meet with, my dear sir, tend to make Christ more precious to us, and sin more hateful ; to deliver us more and more from the love of the world, and from the fear of death, that we may look forward with joy to the time when we shall depart hence to be with Christ, and meet before the throne to part no more.

“ I remain,

“ Your sincere friend,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Chapel Street,
July 10, 1792.

“ ON June 27th I wrote the substance of the following letter, intending to send it with the remaining numbers immediately : but unforeseen hindrances have retarded ; and as you will soon be in town, and I hope to see you at my house, I shall omit sending them till you come.

“ In excuse for my long silence, I can only say that I had so much writing that I could only get through it by the utmost possible exertion ; so that I have lately almost wholly given over cor-

responding with my nearest relatives. I procrastinate therefore from necessity, not from inclination: and, having now, by the help of God, concluded my laborious publication,¹ I shall be glad again occasionally to interchange information and sentiments. Some little books I meant to have sent for distribution; which I shall show you when you come.

“I can cordially unite with you in your observation concerning the wisdom and love of the Lord’s conduct towards us, and the frequent instances of our folly and ingratitude towards him. Humility and gratitude seem to be the two great lessons which we are to learn on earth, in order to our enjoyment in heaven: for the deep sense of our own vileness, and of the Lord’s mercies, forms the principal preparation for joining cordially in the song of the redeemed. Ordinances, providences, and experiences concur in teaching the true believer these lessons. Our sighs, groans, and tears, nay our very blunders and miscarriages, though discordant and distressing, are, like the tuning of an instrument, necessary to the subsequent harmony. But it is a great mercy, with such hearts as our’s, and in such a world as this, to be kept from dishonouring God and the gospel; and we have therefore abundant cause to be thankful that the Lord hath hitherto helped us in any measure: our poor history would have been much worse without this.

“I find it very good to look back on all the way which the Lord hath led me: and, though I can

¹ His Commentary.

recollect few days that I would wish to spend over again, yet I can see that *mercy and goodness have followed me all my days*; and then I learn to hope that they will continue to do so to the end, and for ever. I feel more and more my need of daily renewing my acceptance of Christ and his free salvation; for my best needs pardoning, before it can be either accepted or rewarded. I wish to steer between pharisaical pride and antinomian licentiousness: but hard it is to keep clear of these two rocks on which so many perish! The Lord the Spirit can alone pilot us between them.

“I beg an interest in your prayers, and shall be glad to see you. In the mean time I remain with sincere wishes and prayers for your increasing comfort, &c.

“Your friend and servant,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
September 29, 1792.

“I RECEIVED your's and sent the enclosed to Miss R——: but we have not seen her since you left London, as we expected we should. I am, thank God, much better in health than when you were in town; but I have as much cause to *groan being burdened*, on account of the body of sin that dwells and works within, as any man: but I would thank God for, and rejoice in Christ Jesus and his redemption, and in hopes of final deliverance and victory; of which such groans and griefs are no inconsiderable evidences.

“My time to-day will not allow me to enlarge, as I do not wish to defer sending the parcel any

longer; else I could descant concerning the affairs of the poor French. Alas, they have cast off God, and his word, as a nation, by public authority: and he seems for a time to have cast them off. Abimelech and the men of Shechem¹ seem to be the emblem of their present condition, and that of the emigrants, &c. The folly of human wisdom, the danger of aiming at a speculative perfection beyond the state of fallen nature, the mischief of infidelity, the emptiness of politeness and refinement: these and many other topics might be profitably considered, and illustrated from their example. But I trust that eventually the Lord will bring good from their calamities, and that the cause of *sober* liberty, and even of evangelical religion will be promoted by these confused and tragical events. However, the Lord reigns, the ark is safe, whatever floods come, and I hope we are in the ark, and so that all will be well; and we shall approve the Lord's whole plan, when we view it accomplished.

"I remain with good wishes and prayers for your comfort and best welfare,

"Your sincere friend and servant,

"THOMAS SCOTT."

"DEAR SIR,

"Chapel Street,
June 28, 1793.

I WAS called to leave town some days sooner than I expected, just after I received the favour of your's by Mr. Newton, and the constant succes-

¹ Judges ix.

sion of engagements that I have ever since met with has occasioned my delay in answering it.

“ I entirely agree with you in your observations on the state of things in this and the neighbouring nations: the hand of God is lifted up, but men will not see. I feel no disposition to vindicate the abuses that prevail either in church or state: they are great and many; but not greater or more than the state of human nature, well understood, may lead us to expect. I fear *our* national prosperity is declining because of our sins: and I hope that the Lord will bring some glorious consequences from the confusion and miseries that are diffused on the continent. But the care of my own soul, and attention to my own duty, and to my ministry that I have received of the Lord, are enough for me; and no good can be obtained by intermeddling out of our proper sphere. All I do is to be a peace-maker, where I have influence; as I find that Satan makes great use of these disputes to divide Christians, and prejudice them against each other. Whatever events take place, we shall be safe in the ark, and may have comfort in communion with God and his saints, if we duly mind our own business, and improve our privileges.

“ I thank you for your observations on my little tract on government: but I am not convinced that the ‘certain conceivable cases’ mentioned in it are similar to occult causes; for the state of things at the revolution, in 1688, was exactly the case of which I conceived; and I think a Christian, according to the duty of his station, might very properly have concurred in bringing about that event, and disappointing a small faction in the

state, who were aiming to destroy the liberties and religion of a great nation ; as all descriptions of persons clearly saw. It was therefore a revolution evidently called for by almost the unanimous voice of the nation, as the event proved.—I may further add, that this was the only passage in the book which was inserted at the desire of those friends, whose judgment I had most reason to look up to ; and it was thought it would render the statement more impartial and unexceptionable than it would otherwise have been.

“In respect of my affairs, I shall lose 500*l.* and get the copy-right, which may perhaps be an advantage some time : but I am very well satisfied : if good be done, my end is answered.

“Mrs. S., who is tolerably well, thank God, desires to be kindly remembered to you, and we both desire your prayers for us, and our’s.

“I remain

“Your affectionate friend and servant,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

VII.

LETTERS TO THE REV. DOCTOR RYLAND.¹

1787—1797.

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
January 20, 1787.

“I WAS aware that you would not readily accede to what I advanced² upon the extent, or sufficiency of the death of Christ: nor do I feel much inclined to attempt a more full discussion of the subject. But, as this was one of the first impressions I had of evangelical truth, and as I have never seen cause in the least to alter my sentiment; but have been more and more confirmed in it by every renewed examination: as it forms, and ever has formed, a very prominent feature in my preaching, and the very basis of all my invitations and warnings, and declarations of wrath against those who *neglect so great salvation*: as it is evidently the doctrine of the church of England, and of most of our more eminent divines: it was very proper that I should avow it on this occasion; (because it would have had an appearance of insincerity and shuffling, if I had not:) though I then foresaw, and now find, that many consider it as rather the

¹ Formerly of Northampton, now of Bristol.

² In his Sermon on Election and Final Perseverance. See Life, p. 234, 253, 646. (240, 260, 664.)

most exceptionable part of the sermon ; and it has given Mr. Simms a handle to trouble some people's minds. However, in the long run, ' honesty is the best policy ; ' and most of the ministers, and even some in your line, cordially approve of the distinction. I suppose *you* will allow that there is an infinite sufficiency in the merit of Christ's atonement : and *I* do not in the least suppose (nay I avow the contrary,) that the death of Christ was *intended to save* those who eventually perish. *You* will allow that the language of the cross is *good-will to men*, though sinners : and *I* allow that there is a peculiar purpose of special love to the elect. *You* will allow that no man perishes because of any deficiency in the provision made in the gospel ; but for want of an appetite for that provision : and *I* allow that God gives that appetite to none but those for whom that provision was specially intended. In short, I cannot but think that you allow as much as I do, every time you invite a sinner to come to Christ, insist that faith in Christ is every one's duty, and unbelief an aggravated act of rebellion. And the reason why I think the distinction *important* (for I have other reasons for thinking it *true*,) is, that it affords, in my view, the only firm large ground for invitations ; gives the most easy opening for encouragement to awakened sinners : and leaves the sinner the most inexcusable. I am far from thinking that the lost soul can, in Paul's sense, adopt his words ; (Gal. ii. 20 :) for they refer to the special love and intention of Christ : but the lost sinner may say, ' I am lost, not for want of sufficiency in the atonement, or of love in the heart of Christ, but through

my own inexcusable impenitence and unbelief.' And this, I think, you will allow. In the second edition, which is coming out, I have added one more note upon the subject, and should have gone on further, but that I considered that it would come into fewer hands: and that, if it were necessary, I had better state and consider the subject in a distinct publication.—I trust the effect here has been considerable; though many have left us, and there are difficulties: yet I am not left to discouragement. Such siftings and separations do no harm.—Mr. Newton is, I think, too much afraid of controversy; others are too fond of it. It is necessary that some should *contend* for the truth, and oppose error: but we must look well to our spirits, not only lest we grow warm, but lest we forget in our preaching the *proportion* which the truth we defend bears to the whole system.—If you have any strong new arguments against my sentiments, I shall be obliged to you for them. Mr. Newton is very favourable to the sermon.—I can sympathize with you, and I hope do not forget to pray for you in respect of your severe trial. I trust the end will be mercy and advantage: and I hope it will be better in a temporal sense than your fears; and that the Lord will spare and restore your help-meet. But all here is vanity and vexation, and nothing can comfort us long but the blessed Comforter. As for me my ground is taken; and, unless some one really convinces me that I am in error, I must maintain it as long, and as well as I can: the sword is drawn, and I must either yield, or follow up my stroke one way or other. I am yet in doubt how things will be

at the Lock, but have many firm friends. But I have neither ambition nor expectation of proselyting the world. We are both opposing the same error, of most fatal tendency ; and contending for the same truth, of invaluable excellency : and, if you feel yourself firmer on your ground, fight on, and the Lord prosper you ! But the little ditch between us rather prevents our stepping so well to each other's assistance.—With best wishes and love to yourself, Mrs. R. &c.

“I remain your affectionate brother,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel-street.
June 18, 1787.

“I WAS much disappointed in not finding you at home,¹ as I rode through Northampton in my way to Creaton, and still more so when I found that you were not expected home till the next evening ; as the two mornings were the only time I could possibly contrive to spend with you, and I stood engaged to preach twice the next day at Woolston, near Newport. My journey into the country was unexpected and short, and my preaching and engagements so numerous, that I wonder I was enabled to go through with them : but I had so many pleasing things to support me, that it was a very comfortable journey ; and returning to town was like putting to sea in stormy weather. But he who hath *caused me to triumph* in other places is able to bring about the same here too : and he will do it, if he give me faith, patience, pru-

¹ Life, p. 242. (248.)

dence and meekness.—Nothing but necessary engagements prevented my calling on other friends at Northampton: though, when I found you from home, and things so different than formerly, I had so many thoughts crowded into my mind, that I had no heart to call any where else that morning: and, as I could not see you the next morning, I returned to Ravenstone that night, as much more convenient for my next day's work.

“Believe me, dear sir, it was not from want of sympathy that I did not write to you under your heavy affliction: ¹ but I am conscious that I am not much master of the consolatory strain; and of all temporal afflictions your's is that I am most unmanned, as it were, in the thought of. I was sure that abler pens would be employed on the subject; and it appears to me that the Bible and the throne of grace are the only effectual supports under, and time the only effectual cure for, such a stroke. I heard of it too at a time when I was especially employed; and I had thoughts of writing, but was led to procrastinate. I did not utterly forget to pray for you.

“And now in answer to your letter with the printed case about Mr. Carey. I am sure I wish him success with all my heart. I have some little knowledge of him personally, and have heard a very favourable account of him from many; and I think the case itself is very modest and frugal: but I am afraid I cannot do any thing in it at present. Really my influence with the professors of religion in London, even those who brought

¹ The death of Mrs. Ryland.

me hither, is very small; except as party is concerned with some, and as with others regard to the poor patients prevails. I believe no minister in London is so unpopular. Others may be more unknown, or have a *less* name, but none so *ill* a name, as to doctrine and preaching. No sort owns me, neither one nor another; and those who have seemed to favour me think me wrong; that I carry things too far: or they do not know what to make of me. A few very respectable friends I have; but I am obliged to lean so very hard on them for my own maintenance,—that is, knowing my circumstances, they assist me so liberally,—and I have been so troublesome in other things, that I cannot have the face to ask them at present.¹

“ You have perhaps heard that the Lord is making me the instrument of establishing a sort of new charity in addition to the Lock Hospital, called the Lock Asylum, for the reception of any of the poor women who seem to be penitent under their cure. I sent abroad a pamphlet, stating their misery who had no home but a brothel, nor any mode of subsistence but prostitution; and

¹ See Life, p. 173, 311. (178, 319.)—While it is thus recorded that Dr. Carey, like many other great and good men, at the commencement of his course needed the pecuniary assistance of his friends, let this be connected with the statement which I heard about the year 1810 from the lips of the late Rev. Andrew Fuller, secretary to the Baptist Mission: “ We now expend,” he said, “ between 6000*l.* and 7000*l.* annually on the mission and translations; one half of which sum is furnished by three individuals—the men who do the work. The Missionaries Carey, Marshman, and Ward, earn considerably more than 1000*l.* a-year each by their literary labours; and they throw the whole into the common fund of the mission.”

proposed founding a place for their reception. This brought together several gentlemen: through many difficulties, and steering clear of many rocks, the plan has been adopted, subscriptions are raising, we are about to hire a house, and I trust the Lord will make it very useful. But it lies heavy on my few friends: religious professors in general do not much assist me; worldly people seem more ready. Then I am raising a sum of money to purchase Welsh bibles for a multitude of people who cannot get any.¹ These and other things of the kind render present assistance impracticable: what may be done in a few months I cannot say. However, in the midst of all I have every reason to believe I am made considerably useful.

“I have not room to say much on the subject of your letter by Mr. R. I am very far from acting on the offensive in the business; or from supposing that invitations, &c. cannot consist with a more restricted view: but it seems to me that there is design and wisdom in the *generality* with which the work of God speaks on that subject;² which we lose sight of and counteract, when we are too nice and systematic. I own I am not quite satisfied with brother Fuller’s criticisms upon that subject, and feel confident I could answer them: but I leave that to such as agree *least* with those who come *nearest* to them. Upon Mr. Button’s scheme men fight pinioned, and can scarcely strike at all. Mr. F. has got his string much loosened; but yet, I think, not being quite loose,

¹ Life, p. 261—268. (269—275.) ² See the preceding letter.

it catches him sometimes, and he misses a blow now and then. But I wish you all success. May *the Lord give us a right understanding in all things!*

“I remain your affectionate friend and brother,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
January 30, 1788.

..... “As to my situation, I am very well satisfied with it, if I can but maintain my post. I am not popular, and have very much ceased to covet popularity. You may buy even gold too dear; and I think popularity is often too dear bought: at least I could not go to the price of it if I had the talents for it. But I have many respectable friends, and a considerable field and prospect of usefulness in many lines. The hospital and the asylum united with it furnish me with much work, and, I trust, not labour in vain: and you will be surprised when I inform you that I am actually engaged in writing expository notes and practical observations, in my very plain way, upon the holy scriptures, to be published in weekly numbers..... I can truly say that I sympathize with you in your trials both personal and ministerial: but the Lord will support you under and carry you through all. He is all-sufficient. Nay we cannot do without trials: we must be thankful for our medicines. I do not always forget you at the throne of grace: pray for me also. —If you should have an opportunity of getting

any of the Hints to Patients into the hands of those in the hospital, I will give you some.

“Your’s affectionately,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
August 29, 1791.

..... “WHEN I think of such men as Mr. Huntingdon, I often am ready to compare them to Sampson, whose ingenuity was employed in catching foxes, and tying firebrands to them, to burn up the crops: but Sampson used this stratagem against Philistines; they among Israelites. However, *There must be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest.*—I am much obliged to you for your sermon, &c. respecting Mr. Hall: the remembrance of former times, and a concurrence of reflections, rendered the perusal of it very affecting to me.—I trust the Lord is with you to assist and prosper your labours, and that you will see more and more of the fruit of them from year to year; for, though the truth may be run down, it cannot be kept down. I remain,

“Your most affectionate friend and brother,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
December 24, 1793.

“I SUPPOSE you have seen that a pocket-book is published, the whole of the religious part of which was written or compiled by me; and I bestowed some pains in arranging texts of scripture

into a sort of system of divinity. I have no property in it, but I was vain enough to think that it might prevent some mischief, which I apprehend has been done by such text-books, partially, negligently, and injudiciously collected; by which a half religion has been sanctioned. I suppose I shall continue it if I live, but with alterations; and the pains bestowed about the texts has suggested to me the idea of a work upon the prophecies, the internal evidence of the several constituent parts of the scripture, &c., which seems to me to be original, and may perhaps be prosecuted if I have health and opportunity.¹ But I have had some applications from a respectable quarter to publish a volume or two of sermons.² So you see I am not likely to be cured of the *cacoethes scribendi*, by all my mortifications. So much for that prominent subject, *self*.—I have read Mr. Fuller's book³ twice, and much approve of it: I think it sensible, pious, candid, and judicious, and his manner of treating the Monthly Reviewers must nonplus them; though they are not to be put to shame. I am glad also to add, that my Eclectic brethren⁴ are unanimous in their approbation of it. I had some general idea, when I was reading it, that in some places he rather stood too much on the defensive; and that he might have fairly urged the matter still further in some particulars: but perhaps, all things considered, this might be more prudent. I think a fair answer to it will not easily be made.—I have

¹ Life, p. 318. (326.) ² Ibid. p. 313. (321.)

³ On Socinianism.

⁴ A private society of clergymen, &c.

not seen any of the American books which you mention. From a pamphlet of Dr. Hopkins's, that I formerly saw, I did not think him equal to Edwards, or even to Bellamy: he seems to have an offensive way of expressing even undeniable truths; but perhaps further maturity of judgment may have rectified that obliquity. I should have no objection to make my observations on his Body of Divinity, or on any other of the books that come in my way.—I can have no idea of our love or benevolence being too *disinterested*, if that word be properly explained; but to desire happiness in the enjoyment of God, as the supreme object of all love, and to desire that others also should join in the same felicity, seems perfectly to coincide with the two great commandments of the law, and to harmonize with making the divine glory our grand end in every thing. This kind of self-love belongs to us as creatures, not as sinners; and it is the standard and measure of our love to our neighbour. In this respect I think some of the American divines, and others, have sometimes advanced things incautiously, and drawn unscriptural inferences from their reasonings, as if all regard to our own happiness were interested or sinful;¹ or as if the glory of God, and the felicity of those who love him, could be separated: and I have known many excellent people discouraged and perplexed by such things.

“I know so little of the nature of your new

¹ ‘Edwards fully allows that there is a gracious self-love: see his Treatise on Religious Affections, p. 146, 147, &c.’ J. R.

situation¹ and its duties, that I am utterly incompetent to suggest any counsel. I do however sincerely rejoice that you are fixed in it, and little doubt but God will give you wisdom to fill it to his glory, and also find a pastor for your former people.—Desiring an interest in your prayers, and begging the Lord to prosper your soul and your labours, I remain,

“Your affectionate friend and brother,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
December 23, 1794.

..... “I AM at present busy in writing notes on the Pilgrim’s Progress,² and superintending a very handsome edition of that admirable book. I find great satisfaction in my employment; and hope to produce an useful and acceptable work. It will, I have no doubt, go off well even in its present expensive form: but I have so settled my terms as to be at liberty, after a limited time, to publish it in any other way I please. It appears to me that a better vehicle can hardly be had, for communicating evangelical truth to careless and pharisaical people, than this work, which is read by thousands with avidity, who are strangers or enemies to its real principles; and that it is equally convenient for conveying an antidote to every degree of antinomian poison, working among evangelical professors: though in confidence I whisper to you, that the notes hitherto written upon it appear to me in some cases to favour

¹ At Bristol.

² Life, p. 313, 651. (321, 669.)

sentiments which Bunyan would have opposed, and which tend, contrary to the intention of the writers, to antinomianism.....

“I cannot but hope that the Lord hath considerable good to do by you at Bristol, and the adjacent parts. May he preserve your health and life, increase your wisdom, zeal, and ministerial endowments, and abundantly bless your public and private labours.—I rejoice to hear of the prospect that opens before your missionaries in Asia; yet, knowing something of human nature, I cannot but believe that it will rise violently against their message, when the Hindoos and others generally understand the nature and tendency of it, and the humbling mortifying things it implies. Did I therefore correspond with the missionaries, I should above all things caution them against being too sanguine, and exhort them to pray without ceasing, not only for the patience of suffering, but also for the patience of waiting; in my idea, the most essential requisite for a modern missionary. I have, however, no doubt that the Lord will eventually bless the design; and I have the satisfaction to say, that even some of my acquaintance, who are not very favourable to dissenters, highly applaud it.

“As to my situation, it has in it many discouragements; yet I trust some good is done: and I desire to wait, hope, and pray for a larger *pouring out of the Spirit from on high*; without which all is in vain.—

“I remain, dear sir, most cordially,

“Your affectionate friend and brother,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
June 27, 1797.

“Had I entertained the least idea that my thoughts on Hopkins’s publications, and on the Theological Magazine, were appointed to pass the ordeal of American criticism in a public manner, I should certainly have bestowed rather more pains on them; (for I wrote them but once over, as fast as my nimble pen could move, without stopping, so that the whole of the two letters cost me no more than about two hours and a half;) and I should have used rather more caution and delicacy of expression. However I do not greatly regret what I have done: let them shift for themselves; but I would decline all controversy about them. As to what is said of Calvinism, and Arminianism, and consistency, I can only say, that I certainly believe the doctrines of grace, without the least exception to free, unconditional, eternal election to everlasting life in Christ Jesus; and I do not yet perceive (though I have often been told so both by Arminians and Calvinists,) that I hold any thing inconsistent with that belief. But I am not very anxious about consistency: I apprehend that in this world we see truth by compartments, as it were, and are as incompetent to take in the whole of what is revealed at one view, so as fully to perceive its symmetry and proportions, as an insect is to view the various parts of a building at once, and to decide on the architecture. . . . I know not how it is, but the older I grow the more I love the Bible, and the less I relish any speculations or distinctions that do not evidently

spring from the scriptures, or help me to understand them better, or to feel more of their influence on my heart.—I have not altered my opinion of the Theological Magazine by what I have read of the numbers you last sent me. It is the most perfect contrast to our Evangelical Magazine that can well be imagined. Much of the religion of Old England seems to me to renounce or confound the most important scriptural distinctions, and all depth of study and investigation whatever: much of that [the present divinity] of New England, &c. to run into unscriptural disquisitions and refinements. . . . I have given their system a full share of investigation along with many others that have made as high pretensions. . . . I do think many questions, asked and answered in the Theological Magazine, relate to things absolutely beyond the limits of human knowledge; and have a powerful tendency to produce first a *curious* and then a *sceptical* spirit: and, if numbers do not speculate themselves and one another into infidelity, I am mistaken.—The scriptures teach us that things are so and so, but they do not gratify our curiosity by explaining *how* they are so: and generally we are incapable of comprehending the *manner*, if it were explained. I *believe* the justice of God in the damnation of sinners; but probably I should not fully understand all the reasons and grounds of it, if revealed: yet this is a far plainer subject than many on which such speculations are indulged. I believe that God is infinitely *blessed*, as being unchangeably all-sufficient, and because he has revealed it; but I cannot explain or comprehend his infinite blessedness. The nature of *holiness*,

as conformity to the divine law, and to the divine image shown us through the incarnate Saviour, seems far more level to my apprehension, and more applicable to practice, than all that has been said of the nature of virtue, as *love to being, proportioned to its greatness and goodness*; ¹ though I do not deny, or even doubt the truth of it. But I apprehend the multiplication of such discussions, and of attempts *from reason* to show the nature of holiness, has taken the attention of many from the plain word of God; and I observe sentiments brought forward, as supposed to result from the general principle, which I could easily show to be antisciptural; though I do not believe that the principle implies them: but it is too abstruse for general utility. In short, I feel myself more and more to be very ignorant, and liable to err where I thought myself most sure; I am thoroughly satisfied that the Bible is the word of God; my desire and aim are to understand, explain, and apply it to practical purposes. *Ye are complete in Christ—in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* I have no need to go to any other teacher, any more than to any other saviour. Self-wisdom seems to me as dangerous as self-righteousness. Mysteries could never have been known if not revealed, and can be understood no further than revealed. I am afraid of attempting to be wise above what is written, or of *intruding into things not seen, vainly puffed up with a fleshly mind.* I hear my Saviour say, *Except ye receive*

¹ In a postscript he observes, “Even when I have no objection to the sentiment, I seem to hear men speak in a strange tongue, very different from that of the sacred oracles.”

the kingdom of God as a little child, ye shall not enter therein ; and his apostle add, to the speculating Corinthians, If any man among you seem to be wise, let him become a fool that he may be wise : for the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain ; and he taketh the wise in their own craftiness. Be not wise in your own conceits. These things render me more cautious than I used to be. The first temptation was, *Ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil ;* and the tree of knowledge bore the forbidden fruit. *Vain man would be wise ;* and thirst after knowledge is liable to excess, and needs restraining, as well as others of our natural propensities. When I am disposed to ask a question to which the scriptures have not given an answer, I seem to hear Christ say to me, *What is that to thee ? follow thou me.* The silence of scripture is instructive, and teaches us that the subject concerning which nothing is said is not suited to our present condition : as I tell my children when they ask an improper question, You are not capable of understanding that matter at present: you may be so in due time.— I cannot but think that many of the *modern American divines* have greatly lost sight of these scriptures, and are very deficient in that kind of modesty and humility, which relates to consciousness of incompetency to know *the deep things of God.* They seem little to feel as David did when he said, *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me ; it is high, I cannot attain unto it :* or as Paul did when his discussions on the divine decrees terminated in the exclamation, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God !*

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !

“ I remain, dear sir,

“ Your affectionate friend and brother,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

In the preceding letters, allusion has been made to observations, communicated to Dr. Ryland, on certain works of Dr. Hopkins, a New England divine. From a *fragment* of these observations on Hopkins's Sermons, I transcribe a few sentences which may not be without their use.

“ The argument excluding absolutely, and in all senses, the intervention of *means* in regeneration seems to me expressly to contradict the scripture. 1 Peter i. 23. James i. 18. I apprehend no sinner ever heard and read the scripture, and prayed for a new heart, under a conviction (which millions of unconverted men have had,) that without this change he must perish everlastingly, and persisted in this way, however selfishly and legally it were done, provided any thing were *meant* ; but regeneration certainly took place. I think the general invitations of scripture, to which promises are annexed, (such as Matt. vii, 8, 9 ; James i. 5 ;) encourage even such prayers. When I was a Socinian I credited these promises, and acted upon them : I leave it to others to determine whether I was regenerate or not ; but I know that the Lord heard and answered my prayers, and, in the use of means, a mighty change was effected. I have therefore always encouraged the use of means,

without restriction, in others; except as distinguishing the sham beggar from the real one—which I think is the only scriptural distinction; and consequently have disapproved of nice distinctions in addressing *sinner*s, and calling them to seek the Lord: though I would distinguish as much as possible in helping *professors* to examine *whether they be in the faith*.”

“I am decidedly of opinion that there was *spirituality* in both Brainerd and Edwards, in that [early] part of their experience which they totally condemn. It was, in part, above nature, and contrary to nature, though vastly alloyed. The day had broken, though darkness still prevailed. Here I think they all differ from scripture; for their statements uniformly discourage the diligence of newly awakened persons, (as I have had many opportunities of observing,) by setting them to inquire whether they were seeking *spiritually*: but the scripture always encourages every one *to ask, seek, and knock*; and says, *Then shall ye know if ye follow on to know the Lord*. It is not necessary for us to answer such questions in order to accept the invitation, where *all that will* are welcome. But, if we would [subsequently] determine whether our faith be living and our hope genuine, we must assay it by the standard. If [even then] we cannot come upon the ground of the *promises*, [made to certain *characters*,] we must come upon the warrant of the *invitation*, which requires no qualification, and admits of no hesitation, provided we apply *in order* to receive, and do not take it for granted that we *have* received, and then call that faith. Here I have many years rather differed

from even admired Edwards and Brainerd, rather more from Bellamy, and still more from Hopkins. It is not necessary to distinguish the seeds till they have grown awhile, and then they are easily distinguishable."

"When men are taught to judge of their feelings by certain rules, and to expect things to occur in a certain order, they will often imagine that things go on in that order, and call their feelings by peculiar names. Thus different classes of men naturally relate experiences of their own sort. There is a sameness in the relations of Arminian Methodists; another in that of Calvinistic Methodists. Huntington's disciples all experience in the same manner: so do Mr. ——'s people; and so do those of the New England divines. I own I vastly prefer the latter for substance: but the exact order I view in the same light [in all]; because the scripture does not lay it down. The thing wrought is all, not the order: the former is the same in all [true Christians], the latter almost infinitely varied. Men of lively imaginations, watching their feelings, will, when in earnest about religion, commonly think they experience as they suppose they *should do*, and will infer their conversion from the regularity and order of their experience, rather than from its effects on their future lives: while more cool and diffident persons will be perpetually harassed with apprehensions that they are unconverted, however evident the change, because their alarms, comforts, &c. did not come in regular course, and they cannot speak of such experience as others do. This is worst when the experience itself is enthusiastic; but it leads to delusion or discouragement at all times."

It may not be superfluous here to caution the reader against supposing, that the above observations on religious experience tend to throw a suspicion over the whole subject, and to impeach what has been often alleged concerning the coincidence of experience in Christians of all ages and countries.—By religious experience we understand, that series of effects produced upon the mind, in its varying circumstances, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, by means of revealed truth. This will, of course, be in a measure affected by the peculiar modification of truth presented to the mind: but such modification no more destroys the reality and consistency of Christian experience in all the great outlines, than the variations, national or individual, of the human countenance, prevent there being a certain configuration and combination of features, which characterize the family of man.

VIII.

TO THE EDITOR—CHIEFLY WHILE AT COLLEGE.

1796—1803.

THE first letter which I shall introduce in the present class treats of a subject on which my father was of opinion that much neglect of scriptural rules, and consequently much deviation from the path of duty, frequently takes place in Christian societies, and among individual Christians. It relates to the case of

SCANDALS,

occasioned by persons “professing godliness” acting in such a way as to disgrace their profession; and to the conduct to be adopted towards them. To the letter I shall annex a paper upon the subject written at a much later period—trusting to the indulgence of my readers to excuse any repetition which may be thus produced.

“DEAR JOHN,

“Chapel Street,
February 17, 1796.

“YOUR letter reminds me of our Lord’s words, *Wo be to the world because of offences; it must needs be that offences come, but wo be to that man by whom the offence cometh.* I hope and trust, however, that the lamentable event which has

occurred among you will produce a spirit of watchfulness and prayer; and remind every one, that, whatever may be hoped in the hour of temptation, shame and bitterness are the inevitable consequences of sin. I pray God to direct me to give you such counsel on the occasion as may be most suitable and salutary. In general you know my maxim, *In medio tutissimus ibis*. In most questions, doctrinal and practical, our business is to avoid extremes; and Satan's subtilty consists in pushing us into extremes.—Three objects are before you, demanding your most exact attention: 1. The credit of the gospel and the honour of God: 2. Your own and each other's benefit, as using every method of warning and watching over yourselves and each other, and fortifying your hearts against future temptations: 3. The benefit of the offender, as far as it may consist with the other ends proposed. Now I am of opinion that the right line of conduct will best unite these three ends; and that every deviation will *evidently* militate against some of them, and *really* defeat them all. If you show such tenderness for the offender as to maintain your former familiarity with him, admit him to your religious meetings,¹ and allow him, on general concessions, to proceed as formerly; you will evidently give the enemies of the gospel occasion to think that your principles are lax in their tendency; that your zeal is about doctrines and forms; that you are only a kind of party connected together by certain peculiarities of notion; and that you do not abhor sin, or fear and

¹ See Letter of Nov. 13, 1795, Life, p. 330. (339.)

love God, more than the openly loose characters. In short, they will either charge your profession with hypocrisy, or your principles with tending to licentiousness. At the same time, this excessive and unscriptural lenity would tend to weaken, in the minds of others, the dread and abhorrence of evil, would induce unwatchfulness, and make way for temptation. *Evil communications corrupt good manners : A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump :* and I dare foretel, that, if you relax your strictness in this respect, your meetings will not long remain undisgraced, or your society respectable as it has been. I have known many instances in which prayer-meetings, and other things of that kind have been rendered contemptible, and even mischievous, for want of censuring and excluding offending persons. By such lenity, indeed, you might perhaps preserve the offender among you, and keep him from contrary connexions : but, unless he be truly humbled, and deeply penitent, he will only remain, as an Achan in the camp, to your hurt, not to his own good.

On the other hand, harshness and severity in rebuking or exposing him, while they might seem to show a due regard to the honour of the gospel, and to exhibit a proper example and warning, that others might fear, watch, pray, shun temptation, and resist it ; would evidently militate against the good of the offender, and drive him to a distance from the means of good, and among the enemies of all religion : or, if he were deeply convinced of guilt, he might be tempted to give up his hope. Nor would this conduct exhibit the Christian spirit in an amiable and honourable

light, or tend to the promotion of tenderness, humility, and compassion in your own souls.

“The scriptural rules in these respects are clear. So long as the offender gives no proof of a penitent disposition, you are bound to withdraw from his society; and that so decidedly that all may see you totally disapprove of his conduct, and deem it, while unrepented of, entirely irreconcilable with your principles. But this should be done in the spirit of meekness, love, and prayer: and, if two or three of the most established among you, and such as are known to have most command of their temper, should go, in the name of the whole company that meet together, mildly to admonish, counsel, and exhort him, it might perhaps open the way for *restoring him that has been overtaken with a fault, in the spirit of meekness—considering yourselves, lest you also be tempted.* If tokens of genuine humiliation appear, he should gradually be encouraged, and admitted to your company in private, or by your going to see him; yet cautiously, that your observers may perceive you do it as a physician visits a sick person, not from the love of an infected room, but from compassion for the diseased, and to give medicine. But even then he ought not to be very soon admitted to your meetings; and, when that is done, it should be only as a hearer, till full satisfaction of deep repentance has been given.—If these things be managed in *the meekness of wisdom*, and in a spirit of prayer for him, and for direction for yourselves, I am persuaded that, provided he be penitent, he will submit to this treatment with

humble patience, and be convinced of its propriety: but, should he resent your reserve, caution, and suspension, and persist in so doing, I should have little hope in the case at present: and, though you should try to pull him out of the ditch, you should also be careful that he does not pull you in.—The difference also between the shame of detection, and the remorse of contrition, should be carefully noted. The former regards our own credit, and induces earnestness to preserve or recover it: the latter is comparatively regardless of our own credit, provided the honour of God and the gospel be secured. Yet it must be owned that there are great mixtures even in real penitents, especially at first. It is however requisite that the offender should be made ashamed, and submit to censure: and I apprehend his being brought to the disposition willingly to acquiesce in this, and to a determination to come as much among you as he may do, notwithstanding it, may be considered as a test of his spirit, whether truly humbled or not. I only add, watch every opportunity of restoring him, but by no means countenance him while unrestored.—May the Lord give you wisdom, compassion, and meekness; and give him repentance unto salvation!

“ I remain your ever affectionate father,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

HINTS

On a question, relative to the conduct to be observed towards fallen brethren, discussed at a clerical meeting, at which the writer could not be present: 1815.

“THE question relates exclusively to persons who have been considered as religious characters, but who have fallen, or are supposed to have fallen, into sins which, in proportion as they are known, must disgrace their profession in the eyes of the world. It is of great importance: and it appears to me, that an unscriptural conduct with respect to such cases is very common, both among private Christians and ministers; to the unspeakable detriment of the common cause.

“Four objects are to be regarded in the consideration of it: 1. What line of conduct in us is most conducive to the good of the defaulter; which consists in his being made deeply sensible of his guilt, and humbled for it, and not in his keeping up his confidence, comfort, or credit. 2. What line of conduct is most likely to prevent the unfavourable impression which such falls of professors make on *those without*. 3. What line of conduct is most conscientious in the sight of God, and suited to keep us from being *partakers of other men's sins*. 4. What is most suited to excite a spirit of watchfulness, self-examination, and prayer in other Christians, and to stop the

progress of the infection. But I would observe that, in order to adopt this line of conduct, natural temper must not be consulted: for some would naturally be too harsh and unrelenting, others too timid, easy, and indulgent. Neither is the opinion of our fellow Christians in general a safe guide. Humility, tenderness, and amiable dispositions often lead men to imitate Eli and Jehoshaphat. No man must be *known after the flesh*. (2 Cor. v. 16.) Prejudices and partialities must be discarded. We must not act from our feelings, but from our judgment formed on the word of God.

“Again: We must not take it for granted that the professors in question are certainly converted persons, however high they may have stood in our estimation, or in that of others: for God alone searcheth the hearts, and we are all of us often mistaken where most confident.

“Further: We must not confine our compassion to the culprit, but extend it to our fellow sinners and fellow Christians in general: for tenderness, when unduly exercised to one, may be virtual cruelty to numbers.

“Yet further: In attempting to restore one *overtaken in a fault*, we must distinguish between a single crime, and a continued, habitual course of sin, without adequate proofs of repentance. We must also distinguish between restoration to God and holiness, and the person's reinstatement in his own favourable opinion, and that of his fellow Christians.—Nor must we take one text as our motto, so understood as may lead

us to overlook and act contrary to other texts, in their plain and most undeniable meaning.

“ 1. Then it is evident that the apostle considered the line of conduct which he prescribed to the Thessalonians, not in any very scandalous case, yet with great decision, as conducive to the good of the offender. 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14, 15. And the *withdrawing* of those who used to associate with him with confidence and cordiality, and their excluding him from among them, till he should give scriptural proof of repentance; must be far more likely to lead him to consider his ways and repent of his sin, than keeping up a religious intercourse with him, nearly as if nothing had happened, or nothing that impeached his sincerity.

“ 2. It is evident also that he considered this line of conduct as most conducive to the good of other Christians, and suited to stop the progress of the mischief which might otherwise be expected. 1 Cor. v. 1—6. Heb. xii. 15. Jude 22, 23. 1 Cor. v. 6—12. Gal. ii. 11—14.

“ 3. Further, he regarded it as most suited to counteract the effect of such evils on the minds of those without. Compare 1 Thess. iv. 10—13, with 2 Thess. iii. 6—15, 1 Tim. v. 15. While we palliate, and excuse, and cover the sins of those of our own party, and at the same time are severe upon the sins of others, where is *the wisdom from above*, which is *without partiality*? The blame will in the minds and lips of bystanders be attached to our principles. But, when we withdraw, and enter our protest, according to

scripture, we stop their mouths; and the blame rests on the man.

“It is not needful for us to publish what we know even of *scandals* that are little known; at least not always, or studiously: but, as such things will in general come out, it is equally wrong studiously and, as is sometimes done, beyond the line of *simplicity and godly sincerity*, to veil and conceal them: for, when they do come to light, the whole load of blame falls on the company which has thus covered sin; and, what is worse, on their views of the gospel.

“I am not able to go on to what belongs to appreciating the sincerity of the fallen professor’s repentance; but certainly, while he says with Saul, *I have sinned, yet honour me before the people*; while he palliates his offence, and throws blame on others, and expresses displeasure against those who have brought his crimes to light; and seems as much or more grieved at the detection, and his consequent loss of credit, (perhaps calling it loss of usefulness,) as on account of his sin against God, and the mischief done to man; it must be highly unsatisfactory.—Our opinion cannot affect his state: if we err on the unfavourable side, it will not prevent his acceptance with God: but, if we err *greatly* on the other side, it will produce most pernicious consequences; and may probably lull him into a fatal security.—St. Paul did not interpose about the reinstatement of the incestuous Corinthian, till his repentance was manifest, and there appeared danger lest Satan should take advantage on the other side, both against him and the common cause. 2 Cor. ii. I have sel-

dom met with those who have disgraced the gospel by a continued course of concealed sin, which was at length discovered, who have been in danger of being *swallowed up of over-much sorrow*.

“It is enjoined: *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; but shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him*. In my more private line I have several times written a letter, plain and faithful, yet compassionate, stating what has been reported or proved, and appealing to the person’s conscience, whether it were true or not; and have, either at the time, or in another letter, when no satisfactory effect had followed, counselled him (in a manner that has never yet been disregarded,) not to come to the Lord’s table among us, till the matter should be cleared up. In some instances this has succeeded happily to the individual; in all, I believe, it has taken off, or counteracted, when it became known, the unfavourable impression which would have been made with respect to us and our principles; and has excited searchings of heart, vigilance, and prayer among professors of religion. At the same time it has satisfied my conscience, that in this respect at least I was not *partaker of other men’s sins*. If this, or what we can do in this way will not avail, our Lord’s rule is, *Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican*: and we must not presume to be more merciful than our Master.

“Had ministers of the gospel, in this day of relaxed discipline, courage and firmness to adopt this line of conduct, or somewhat of a similar nature, impartially among rich and poor, with intimate friends as well as others; and to risk the

consequences ; no one can well conceive how it would raise their credit even among the irreligious. I have found this. ‘Well,’ say they, ‘this man is impartial: he is not decided against the sins of others only, but against those of his own party; not only in the case of the poor, but in that of the rich.’ But, without discipline, or any decided conduct in this respect, the ministerial authority sinks into neglect and contempt.—I need not say that our kindness in temporals, as far as it does not imply approbation ; and our openness to access, whenever it may tend to recover the fallen ; should be equally marked with our firmness, if we would produce any eminently salutary effects.”

We now return to the letters.

“ Chapel Street,
December 29, 1796.

“ You see among your little company at —— an epitome of the profession of the gospel, especially in London. A laxity in practice, and a disposition to excuse worldly conformity in various instances, which a spiritual mind must disrelish, and which a discerning Christian must see to be of bad consequence in all respects, is, alas! very common ; and it is attended by a readiness to censure as precise, severe, and censorious, such ministers and Christians as maintain the apostolic ground, *Be not conformed to this world—redeem the time—do all to the glory of God, &c.* Even in your situation you must expect to taste of that trial which I have for so many years sustained from professors, and even from real Christians, on this ground. But I hope you will be endued with

firmness, fortitude, and the *meekness of wisdom*: and if, avoiding all eager disputation, you stand your ground properly, you may be of some use among your companions, though they may affect to censure or ridicule you."

The following extracts relate to a college life and college fellowships:—

"Chapel Street,
February 22, 1797.

"I WAS aware when I placed you at ——— in preference to other colleges, that you would not be so well situated as to temporal interests, as in other places: but my principles led me to give a decided preference to spiritual advantages, and to act upon the maxim, that that is best for us which is best for our souls. I am greatly averse to the idea of a college life: a kind of stiffness, fastidiousness, and unfitness for domestic scenes, and for active usefulness, seems almost universally contracted by those who reside in colleges; as well as a habit of having every thing their own way, which leads to impatience and an overbearing temper. My desire and prayer for you are, that you may be a minister of Christ, a pastor of his flock, to preach the gospel to the poor and unlearned, as cheerfully as to any others; and to accommodate yourself to those scenes of life, which especially belong to that service. So that it will never be with my approbation if you embrace a college life: and I think you name it very rightly when you speak of it as a *temptation*—from which temptation I pray that you may be preserved.—I

am not very favourable to the idea of fellowships, generally; because I believe they are temptations to many to choose a kind of life which is ensnaring to them, and often to turn life the wrong end forwards: so that, after living unmarried till they have contracted habits unsuitable to domestic life, they marry when advanced in life, and have families when they can ill brook the trouble, or exert themselves properly in the education of them. And let me tell you, that it is an easier matter to think at a distance of giving up a snug hundred or two a year, than it is actually to part with it even at the call of duty and conscience. You should watch and pray very much against the ambition of distinction, the pride of learning, and the desire of worldly advantages; for these you must be exposed to, and they will greatly hurt your simplicity, comfort, and usefulness. If you simply and humbly give up yourself to the Lord for the work of the ministry, he will certainly both employ and provide for you. *Take therefore no thought for the morrow, &c."*

“Chapel Street,
March 7, 1797.

“I WISH you to attain the solid advantages of learning, not so much that you may derive temporal emolument or distinction from them, as that you may be qualified to do good in the world: but I often observe these advantages to be bought too dear. I still fear lest a fellowship, and academical influence or distinction, should win you over to a college life; where, at ease, but

often with little usefulness, and I fear not seldom amidst temptations too powerful for them, many seem to while away life improperly. A fellowship separated from residence, as far as it is a temporary provision, and gives distinction or influence, which may subserve usefulness in future life, is less exceptionable. Yet I find more and more from what I read and hear continually, that it is frequently the source of many evils; and men are so loath to part with the sinecure emolument, that they submit to the conditions of keeping it, contrary not only to their inclination, but to their duty; and then palliate matters to their consciences as well as they can. As to young men in general, as human nature is, I am decidedly against every thing that makes it their interest to live unmarried; and therefore against fellowships in the abstract: and I was not displeased to hear Mr. Foster (himself an old bachelor,) last night express himself strongly in favour of early marriage, as the best preservative of purity and good morals, in the present state of things: and I believe any experienced and impartial observer, judging merely from facts gradually coming to light, would be of the same opinion. But there are exceptions. You see clearly then the ground on which I go, in saying that I can only advise you as a friend, and not prescribe to you as a father. Having nothing in my power towards promoting your temporal interest, I am not authorized to prohibit you from availing yourself of those advantages which may be laid in your way: nor do I deem it your duty to refuse them absolutely; but only when the glory and authority of God, the advantage of your own

soul, and usefulness to the souls of others, call you to do it. I have a confidence that you will not only pray, *Lead us not into temptation*, but that you will have grace not to run yourself into temptation, and resolutely to reject every emolument or distinction which might lead you into it: yea that you will rather venture all consequences of being poor and obscure in the world, trusting in providence, and *exercising yourself to have a conscience void of offence*, than admit of any plea of necessity for living in a state in which you had not grace and strength to live according to the purity of God's precepts, as in his sight, when that necessity arises merely from distrust, ambition, interest, or fondness for a man's own humour or projects, in opposition to the appointment, provision, and will of the great Creator. I placed you at ———, as for other reasons, so, secretly, that you might not have the temptation of a fellowship; for such it certainly is in general. But the considerations which I have urged being duly weighed and prayed over, I must now leave you to determine for yourself, as far as I am concerned."

In the year 1798 many members of the university, in common with a large portion of our population generally, were trained to the use of arms for the defence of the country. This led to questions which drew from him the following observations:

" Chapel Street,
April 24, 1798.

" I AM, by inclination and judgment, so very averse to the profession of arms, that I had rather

see any of you cobblers than colonels. I am likewise averse to any of those, whom I am especially concerned about, doing any thing that marks a *strong* political opinion. And yet the times are such, and the danger so great, not only to our civil liberty, our property, and every temporal interest, but to our religion itself; the contest seems so evidently to be, not merely *pro focis*, but likewise *pro aris*; that I hesitate in respect of all my inclinations and determinations. I should be sorry also at this time for you to be so particular, as to give reason to suspect that you were disaffected. I think I should fight, if a house-breaker, having taken my property, should assault me, or my wife or children; notwithstanding my love of peace. I cannot see any force in the reasonings of those who would condemn war in all possible cases; and I believe some of them would fight by instinct, as it were, in some circumstances: but, in all cases, I conceive war to be a great evil; a dreadful calamity to some, and a dreadful crime in others. I am not disposed to inquire into the source of our present calamities, except as they originate in the Lord's anger against our sins: but I apprehend they were, and I am sure they now are, unavoidable by human prudence. Under God, I look upon unity of effort, and firmness in self-defence, to be our only possible preservative; and I should be sorry to do any thing to prevent, in any measure, that unity: yet I am decidedly of opinion, that he who labours successfully to bring men to a sense of their duty, and to repent and turn to God, does more towards our national preservation, than the most valiant soldier or officer, or the most vigilant

magistrate, or the most sagacious senator. I should be sorry to see you exposed either to the danger of actual service, or to that of such company and scenes as connect with military affairs; and still more to see you *inclined* to such a life. But I seem to be confident that the latter will not be the case, and to have a considerable prevalence of hope that the former will not. There is nothing unlawful, that I know of, in learning to handle a musket; yet I should think it in general inexpedient in your situation, and with the prospect before you: but necessity has no law. If so many declined, as to keep you in countenance in declining, I should by all means prefer it: if it would be deemed a whimsical or disaffected singularity, you had perhaps better bear the cross for a while. . . . I have a hope, that, though the Lord humble us, and impoverish us, as a nation, he will not give us up to our enemies: and some things I hear, from time to time, of a more religious turn in persons quite out of our line, cherish this expectation. However I would not have you, or any one educating for the ministry, to set your heart on the emoluments and distinctions of the profession; which are at present peculiarly precarious. At all events, the work of the minister will, in some way, be needful, useful, and honourable; and, if convulsions should take place, the truth will not be kept down long: the *witnesses* will soon *rise and ascend*; and happy will they be who are numbered with them.

“I cannot answer Mr. ——’s question”—relative to clergymen without cure of souls being trained to the use of arms: “for general rules are not absolute universals. I do not read in the New

Testament of ministers without cure of souls, in one form or other: they are a non-descript, concerning whom no rules seem given; a kind of amphibious being, belonging to neither element exclusively. But, if the apostles would not *leave the word of God to serve tables*, I am persuaded they would not have left it to become soldiers: and, even if the war had been *pro aris*, they would have said, *We will give ourselves to the word of God and prayer*. Yet, possibly, exceptions might be made. One thing however I will add, I will never fight myself if I can help it.—So much after dinner on a Tuesday”—that is, before visiting the hospital.

With this may be connected a portion of another letter written in 1803.

“Aston,
July 31, 1803.

“My opinion of the present crisis is, that it may be illustrated by the case of an avowed intention of a set of vile banditti, to rob the house and murder the family of some opulent individual. What should we in this case think of the master, who should leave the women and children defenceless to screen themselves, probably in vain? What should we say of servants, who should urge, Let my master and mistress take care of themselves, it is not my concern? What if they should plead conscience for such dereliction? Self-defence would be my *duty*, if assaulted on the high road, and my life endangered: and defence of my wife and children, who look to me for protection, requires me to stand firm, if an assassin threatens the house.

“The present law, recognizing the king’s just prerogative of calling out every effective man, in case of actual invasion and real necessity, meets my most cordial approbation; and, as modified by the proposal to accept voluntary enrolling, &c., is no more than an offer to teach every man, in case of necessity, the best way of uniting with others in defending the community in each district: and I think every man who has no just exemption, or more important employment, ought to concur; not so much to become a soldier and to fight, as to prevent the necessity. For, should ten well armed men be habitually ready in the house, which three or four banditti meant to assail, and were this known, it would probably prevent the attack.

“But the sabbath!—Now here I say, it is not to be expected that our rulers *en masse*, or *en pluralité*, should be godly men, and see with our eyes; nor must we suffer all that are dear to us to be destroyed because they are not. They have exceeded my expectation, in granting relief to tender consciences, by excusing them on moderate terms, from being exercised on the Sunday I exhort those, whom I can influence, to show a readiness to learn the exercise with others; but unless in case of imperious overpowering necessity, which supersedes every thing, to refuse exercising on the Lord’s day; and to show that a man may learn to unite in defending our families, without entering into the military spirit, or at least into the profane and riotous part of it. I should have been embarrassed, had not the concession alluded to been made: but, though I highly regard Mr. Robinson’s judgment, and account him a

higher government man than myself, I think the present case is not one in which the protest should be entered against the measures of our rulers. Another time or manner may be taken of protesting against legalized infringements of the sabbath. If the house were on fire, we should any of us think ourselves authorized to play the engine on the sabbath. The case does not exactly coincide : but even some of our friends will hardly see the difference, and our enemies will be sure not to see it. The clamour is, that dissenters, methodists, and evangelical churchmen are all secretly jacobins : every opposition to the present measure will render the clamour more plausible. Even quietly availing ourselves of the allowed exemption will be noticed : and I think nothing further should be added to it. But, if any man's conscience is otherwise set, I must leave it."

The following extract will show his sentiments on some important points relating to Christian missions generally, and on the proceedings of a society for which, though he declined connecting himself with it, and could not approve all its measures, he yet felt at all times the most cordial good will, and a few years afterwards publicly testified his good will by preaching for it.¹ I presume the sentiments here expressed pretty nearly coincide with those now entertained by many of its firmest supporters : and the publication of them cannot, I trust, be considered as bearing in any degree an unfriendly aspect towards the so-

¹ Life, p. 316, 378. (324, 389.)

ciety. It refers to the capture of the Missionary ship, the Duff; the expulsion of many of the missionaries from what has since been the scene of their most extraordinary success, the Islands of Otaheite; and the spoliation of such as were suffered to remain.

“Chapel Street,
September 28, 1799.

“I do not think any of the things which have happened to the London Missionary Society will eventually injure the cause of missions. I really foretold, at least foreboded, and privately uttered my forebodings, that such would be the event of their over-sanguine and hasty, though well-meant proceedings. The apostles had no missionary ship, worth so many thousands as to tempt depredators. *Armed* and *rich* missionaries, as those at Otaheite were, might expect to be plundered and overpowered, as much as a man in London, unprotected by law, who was loaded with gold and jewels. It must be so without miracles. I said they were too rich to be safe, or to have any prospect of safety; and their fire-arms and military exercise were like a declaration of war. The seven that are left behind are exactly in the condition I should have wished them to have been in at first landing; nothing to trust to for protection and provision but the Lord, and under him the favour he may give them with the people. But of almost all places these islands are the last I should have selected.—You may depend upon it

that our new society¹ is not needlessly losing time. We cast anchor for a while, to avoid running on rocks; but we mean soon to go on: and we would wish not to make more haste than good speed. We mean to begin on a small scale, and afterwards to enlarge it if we can; and we have no fear of not getting money, if the Lord will but *form* us missionaries. One thing we have done: as soon as we heard that the Duff was taken, we, as individuals of the Committee, sent the Missionary Society a hundred guineas, as a token of regard and condolence; which has tended greatly to conciliate them, and to convince them that we are coadjutors and not rivals. The world is under obligations to that society; but their love and zeal have not been directed by proportionable wisdom. They will profit by their losses, and we shall profit by their mistakes; and I doubt not that the whole will tend to the furtherance of the gospel. Money will be soon found to make up those losses; and wisdom gained by experience is of inestimable value."

Of the contribution towards repairing the Society's loss I shall beg leave to subjoin a somewhat fuller account, from a memorandum made by a friend shortly after it took place.

"When the London Missionary Society lost the ship Duff, though he had never approved of their having such a vessel, yet, filled with Christian sympathy, and struck with the opportunity of testifying good will to a society with which he

¹ The Church Missionary Society.

and his brethren declined to act, he put off an intended journey to Margate, and, calling together the committee of the Church Missionary Society, (of which he was secretary,) he proposed a subscription from their private purses towards alleviating the loss which the other society had sustained. Here again he was supported by Mr. Venn. The members present subscribed fifty guineas; and, calculating on the concurrence of their absent associates, they ventured to send that night a donation of one hundred guineas, to which about thirty more were afterwards added. The effect was striking in promoting conciliation and good will, and convincing all concerned that they were brethren engaged in the same great object, though pursuing it each in his own line."

IX.

LETTERS TO A FRIEND IN SCOTLAND.

1794—1811.

THIS correspondent, in communicating my father's letters to me, says, "I set a high value upon them: they were to me very seasonable and very useful; and, I may add, were of use to many of my friends here, who generally saw my correspondence. I trust I shall always retain a grateful sense of the Lord's kindness towards me in bringing me to an acquaintance with his writings, and to the enjoyment of his correspondence. . . . That I derived no more benefit from his writings and correspondence is my sin, and what I desire to be humbled for daily before God: but I would acknowledge, to the praise of *His* name, that any just, scriptural, and judicious views which I have of divine truth, both in matters of faith and practice, I owe, under God, to your father; and particularly in those things which may, in a certain sense, be called his peculiar sentiments—such as relate to man's responsibility, the holy nature and tendency of faith, and the spiritual exercise of genuine godliness. From him I was led to an acquaintance with Fuller's and Ryland's writings, and some of the Americans, particularly Edwards and Bellamy; all of whom, in a great measure,

have been taught in the same school. And, the more I read in his Life, and such of his letters as you have already published, the more the beauty and excellence of these sentiments appear. The letters I now send you confirm the same views. In fact he was invariably one and the same: in his Commentary, his other works, his correspondence, and at his own fire-side, the same correct uniform sentiments prevailed; universal holiness of heart and life, arising from a living faith in the doctrines of free grace, received by divine teaching. You will observe many things about our transactions in books that will have to be left out. We did a good deal of business together in the way of selling his various publications; and I reckon it one of the happiest circumstances of my life, that I was the means of first introducing his works, in any general way, among the middling and lower classes of people in this north country. His great disinterestedness you will perceive very prominent in all he wrote to me on matters of business.—Our correspondence gradually dropped away about the years 1811, 1812, which I exceedingly regret. It arose chiefly from his declining years and numerous engagements preventing his corresponding so fully on general subjects: and also from my being able to do much less in the way of disposing of his works—the booksellers finding it their interest to keep them on hand as they came into notice.”

ON THE DIVINE DECREES.

“SIR,

“Chapel Street,
December 24th, 1794.

“I MIGHT be surprised, but could not perceive the least cause of being offended, by your very frank and respectful address, which surely was more suited to please than to displease any man of tolerable candour. I desire to be thankful if any human being derive advantage from what the Lord enables me to attempt; and, as far as my many engagements will allow of it, I would be willing to take up the stumbling blocks out of the way of Zion’s travellers,¹ by private and particular counsel, as well as by more public and general instructions.

“In respect of the deep points on which you desire my opinion, I shall be glad to give you any satisfaction: but a thinking mind will always be impeded by difficulties about them, till increasing acquaintance with the human heart, and the state of the world, gradually dissipate the darkness: and I should judge from the style of your letter, that you are seeking in the right way to him who makes *dark things light, and crooked things straight*, before his people. I have long been very decided in my judgment in respect of the truth and reasonableness of these doctrines, which I once quarrelled with even to blasphemy: yet I hold them in such a way, and assign them in so moderate a proportion to other parts of revelation, that the

¹ Isa. lvii. 14.

vehement Calvinists own me not as staunch to their party: but, though I am by no means disposed to consider the belief of them as essential to salvation, I find myself not more approved by the zealous Arminians; for I always insist upon it, that, if men cannot receive them, they ought not to venture a single word, which, in case they should be true, would prove to be derogatory to the honour of the divine character and government.

“I consider the doctrine of the divine decrees as inseparable from that of the prescience or omniscience of God; and I cannot conceive it possible for any man to answer the reasonings of a competent logician in proof of this philosophical position. Mr. Locke, though no friend to Calvinism, has made extraordinary concessions in this respect. But then, I do not think myself allowed to mix the philosophy of the doctrine with the divinity of it; but bound to confine myself, as a preacher, to the word of God, without tracing revealed truths to unrevealed causes and consequences; by which some reasoning Calvinists have clogged the doctrine with difficulties, and exposed it to objections, which have nothing to do with the scriptural statement of it.—The sovereignty of God is, I apprehend, a very different thing from arbitrary power: it is the sovereignty of infinite wisdom, knowledge, justice, truth, goodness, and mercy; and, therefore, nothing can be decreed by it, which is not the best possible, all things considered. Now, if the best plan possible be selected and executed, what does it signify whether it was formed, in every part, from eternity, or whether it was formed at the moment, as circumstances re-

quired?—God does nothing without the best possible reasons, but he does not gratify the pride and curiosity of fallen rebels, by assigning his reasons to them. He doubtless has reasons for choosing a sinner to salvation: but the sinner's merit, or inferior degree of criminality, or more docile disposition, or *natural* voluntary concurrence with his grace, is not of the number of these reasons: but the *desert* of those that perish is the assigned and proper reason why he punishes them.

“The decrees of God respecting man do not relate to him merely as *a rational creature*, but as *a fallen rebel*. God sees the whole human race in the ruins of the fall; and, while he judges, with infallible truth, that they all deserve to perish, and must perish unless infinite wisdom devise a plan, infinite love provide a remedy, and infinite power apply it; he determines, for reasons best known to himself, to glorify his awful justice in punishing some according to their deservings, and to glorify his most abundant mercy and grace in saving others, in a way that shows them to be deserving of the same condemnation. The indissoluble knot in this business is the first entrance of evil into God's creation: this he could have prevented, but has not; nor could his almighty intervention have consisted with his moral government; as an invincible barrier to all disobedience must have made all laws, &c. useless, and all displays of his moral perfections comparatively feeble and indistinct. But ‘silence becomes ignorance:’ and further I dare not speculate. He does all to the praise of his own glory: and, at last, that will be most displayed by the plan he has adopted. However, the

difficulty is the same on every system ; for evil does exist.

“ It is plain, from the fulfilment of many prophecies, by the voluntary actions of numerous agents combined against God and his cause ; that his decrees are in no respect either the motive of men’s actions, or inconsistent with their free agency. But, by a wisdom to us incomprehensible, he leaves men to follow their own inclinations, and places them in such circumstances as infallibly secure the accomplishment of his secret purposes. The whole world *lieth in wickedness* ; and you justly observe that the apostle ascribes this to their evil dispositions : idolatry arose from men’s *not liking to retain God in their knowledge*. Ever since the fall, men have been *carnal*, as *born of the flesh* : and, *the carnal mind is enmity against God*. This enmity induces every man, as left to himself, and as tempted by Satan, to break and hate the law of God : and, even after all that Christ has done and suffered for sinners, if men were left to themselves, they would universally hate and reject the gospel, because it honours the law, and is diametrically opposite to their pride and lusts. *Ye must, then, be born again*. Now this is a *resurrection* from a spiritual death, a *new creation*, an act of omnipotence. No sinner can merit it ; none is disposed to claim it ; none can do, or will attempt, any thing to effect it : but God, as a sovereign, *has mercy on whom he will have mercy*, and leaves whom he will of his proud enemies to be hardened. *Of his great love wherewith he loved us when dead in sin, he quickened us ; and made us willing in the day of his power*.

This, I apprehend, is the only reason why one sinner repents, believes, fears, prays, hopes, loves, and obeys, while another continues obstinate in impenitence, unbelief, and disobedience. So that none are rejected because not elect, without respect to the sin of their conduct, and the determined sinfulness of their hearts; and the promises are all made to such holy dispositions as are the fruits of special grace, the effects of regeneration.—This, therefore, is perfectly consistent with commands, exhortations, invitations, and expostulations. If any man find a willingness to comply with the exhortation, and embrace the invitation of the gospel, *let him come and take of the water of life freely*; for Christ *will in no wise cast out him that cometh*.—Nor is it requisite that he should determine the nature and source of this willingness, before he comes; though he will in due time be led to ascribe it to special grace, if indeed it be a willingness to be saved, in the Lord's way, from sin and all its consequences, to use the prescribed means, and to renounce all things for the sake of Christ. But, if any man be not thus willing, whatever he may pretend now, he will at length find that his unwillingness arose from enmity to God and holiness, from pride of heart, and love of sin; and that God only purposed to leave a perverse rebel to his own mad choice, without exerting his omnipotence to conquer his obstinacy. So that nothing can be more false, than the representations some give of the doctrine,—as if God determined to save some men, however wicked and slothful they were; and to damn others, however desirous of salvation, and diligent in seeking it:

though some zealous Calvinists have said unguarded things, which give plausibility to such cavils.

“No man can know his election, except by the evidences of regeneration, especially repentance and its fruits, and faith in Christ working by love to him, his people, and his commands. In proportion as these are clear, he may infer his election of God, and conclude that he will perfect the good work he hath begun: but, if these be obscure, it is proportionably presumptuous for men to conclude themselves elect, or to encourage themselves with the doctrine of final perseverance.—Hence you will perceive, that many objections to the doctrines, and abuses of them, are the effects of human depravity, and have no real relation to the truths themselves. Many deem themselves elect because they believe election and dispute for it; yet their boastings, railings, evil tempers, and worldly lives are black marks of reprobation; that is, that at present they are *disapproved* characters. But no man can know that he is not elect; for, whatever his past or present conduct may be, he may yet be converted: and every serious conviction, and desire after salvation, is a hopeful token; and a willing mind (as above described,) is a certain proof of election.—The distress of numbers on this ground is wholly the effect of misapprehension and temptation.

“Election with the doctrines connected with it, when truly believed, must produce humiliation before God; gratitude to him for every hopeful token of being made to differ; a disposition to give him all the glory, and devote ourselves to him; meek-

ness, long-suffering, tender compassion for sinners; hope of their salvation by the same grace that saves us; diligence in using means for that end,—as God works by means; and in short, every holy temper. It gives encouragement to wrestle, run, and labour, by the assurance that no temptation shall at last deprive us of the blessing: but no encouragement to be slothful, or to indulge in sin; because that must make our election doubtful.—Finally, many are elect and called, and manifest the humility and holy tendency of the doctrine, and its effects upon their hearts, who dissent from the notions they have formed of it in their heads.

“If these general thoughts be of any use to you, or by you to any other, I shall deem it a privilege; and shall be glad to answer any question you may further propose. In general, ascribe the glory of all the good to God, and the blame of all the bad to man, and you cannot be far wrong. Desiring an interest in your prayers, and to be remembered with love to all my unknown brethren with you,

“I remain,

“Your friend and servant in Christ,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
September 18, 1795.

.... “My state of health, which is generally bad at this time of the year, joined to various other circumstances, seems to incapacitate me for writing much, or much to the purpose, at present.—In respect to the external forms, and other

such distinctions among persons who appear, as humble penitents, to rely on the merits and atonement of the divine Saviour, and to desire to live according to his will, and to his glory, I pay but little regard to them. I believe there are many things unscriptural among us all; that is either defective, redundant, or erroneous: but human nature is very fallible; ten thousand circumstances produce prejudices, which warp the judgment; and the Lord seems to illuminate his people but in part. There must therefore be differences of opinion: these our corrupt passions will magnify into matters of importance, and urge us tenaciously and vehemently to contend about them: the enemy will stir up these passions, to disgrace and weaken the common cause, and to take men off from such endeavours as tend to subvert his kingdom; and by his influence, together with the deceitfulness of our hearts, we are readily persuaded to think we are zealous for the Lord God of hosts, and doing him service, while we are thus gratifying our pride or malignity.—I do not consider these things (in which we differ) as *immaterial*; for there is right and wrong, truth and falsehood in every thing; and they have always some effect on the heart and conduct: but, when we are satisfied in our minds, as far as circumstances will admit, that we are in the place, and worshipping after the manner, that it is the will of God we should, we are not vainly to imagine that we can do much more; or that we can remove rocks and mountains;—for it would be no less a work if we could bring the state of the church, even in our own neighbour-

hood, from what ages have confirmed, to what we think right: and, at last, we are as liable to be prejudiced and to mistake as other men. I have not met with any society or denomination of Christians, with whom I should agree in every thing: but, all things considered, I have deemed it my duty to abide where the Lord first found me, in that respect. I never could find liberty to join any other body: and I felt no temptation to attempt another division of the church. I am not called upon to do any thing contrary to my conscience: and, if I were, the path is plain—give up the advantage, and bear the loss or cross; then conscience may be followed. Nor do I deem myself answerable for the sins of others belonging to the same *corps*.—If the different sects of Christians, among whom the truths of the gospel are maintained, would but consider themselves as different regiments in the same army; and stand up, as it were, for the honour of their particular regiment, (only) by endeavouring to outdo others in promoting the spread of true religion; and thus fighting against the common enemy: the divisions might be overruled for good. But, alas! too many say, *We saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us*; and, while they frown upon, instead of forwarding, and praying for success to, every endeavour to disseminate truth in a dark world; they prejudice and harden the minds of worldly people by their eager, not to say fierce, contests with each other: and, having thus caused their zeal to evaporate, they remain indifferent and lukewarm about the common cause.—But there are some

symptoms of a better spirit in this country; and that, connected with steadiness in the principles held. The Antipedobaptist missions are supported liberally by many Pedobaptists, both dissenters and churchmen: and other plans of a similar nature are set on foot. As far as we can, we should assist all such undertakings, if they seem to originate from good motives, and to be conducted in the fear of God: and we should pray for success to them all, if we can do nothing more. The world is wide: perhaps not one fourth of mankind profess Christianity; and, alas! perhaps not one in a hundred of those called Christians are really such. Let us enlarge our views, desires, and prayers beyond the limits of a sect or party; according to the extensive meaning of the first clauses of the Lord's prayer.

"I have let my pen run on upon this subject, so that I have no room for another. But *the deceiving of souls* may be compared to the picking of pockets. He who is much afraid of having his pocket picked will generally take such precautions as will prevent it: so will he who is much afraid of being deceived; especially the means used by David, Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.

"I remain, with best wishes and prayers, your sincerely affectionate friend and servant,

"THOMAS SCOTT."

"DEAR SIR,

"Chapel Street,
March 17, 1796.

..... "I HAVE been so peculiarly engaged in writing for the volume of sermons which I am printing, that I have been almost constrained to

put off my correspondents, in order that I might not hinder the printer. Upon the whole my health is better than when I wrote last: but I am not generally very well; and I find that too close application to writing hurts me more than any other exertion. I have however as good health, taking one time with another, as I have had for many years; and as good as I ought to have—far better than I have any right to. I know also that I shall live as long as the Lord has any work for me to do: and I need not desire to live longer.

“ If any of your friends should wish to have the Bible, I would rather favour them, by foregoing my usual profit: that is, if their circumstances require it: for somebody must maintain authors, as well as printers. You must not speak of this therefore to wealthy persons.

“ I am afraid that, having no peculiar subject on which to write, my letter will be far too dear of postage: yet silence would not so emphatically express a desire of hearing concerning your welfare, and of dropping any hints that I can of an useful nature. With much difficulty I have got a little before the printer, and am *owning*, if not *paying*, my debts to my correspondents; and I was not satisfied to leave you out: for, if I say little at present, your answer may make way for something rather more to the purpose another time.

“ Your account of the state of religion in Scotland, though rather discouraging, gives me the idea that far more regard has been, and even still is, there paid to the gospel than in England.

Some years ago. . . . it might almost be said that the whole was here sunk into formality and self-righteousness. The irregular and desultory, yet zealous and honest labours of Mr. Whitefield and his coadjutors produced great effects; and since he went forth there has been a great revival in the established church. Nor were the labours of Mr. Wesley and his helpers without much fruit. Yet a great deduction must be made. A flashy, superficial, and immethodical style of preaching was rendered fashionable: gradually a view of the gospel rather tending to antinomianism was introduced by the successors of the ministers that have been mentioned—that is, of Mr. Whitefield and Co. An experience which admits of a great mixture of enthusiasm, and opens the door to delusion, was sanctioned: a bad taste, so to speak, was propagated: and the eminence of the men who set the example gave currency to these things; which became far worse in the hands of men in all respects their inferiors. In the church of England, among those who are reputed to preach the gospel, many do comparatively little. There are, however, a considerable number of able, solid, and zealous men; and the expensive encouragement given by some superior people to the education of pious young men, of good abilities, for the ministry, presents the most pleasant prospect that the state of things affords. But, alas! our superiors in the church either oppose the most unexceptionable men who preach according to the articles and liturgy, or are afraid to countenance them. Among the numerous

bodies of the Calvinistic and Arminian Methodists, a considerable degree of fervour and earnestness is discoverable; and I trust there are many well-meaning people: but their religion is superficial; and they are easily deluded into pernicious errors, or unbecoming practices, for want of more complete and clear acquaintance with the system of truth, and the rule of duty. Though the two sects seem totally to differ, yet the same defect is visible in both; only the Arminians are more enthusiastic and joyful, the Calvinists more acquainted with their own hearts, and employed in escaping dejection by a low experience. But, in fact, superficial views of our obligations to holiness, according to the spiritual law of God, and an unperceived tendency to antinomianism, are too common in both—though the Arminians are thought to be in the opposite extreme. The dissenters, both Baptists and Pedobaptists, are of various kinds. Some are of the methodistical cast, and have much life, and not proportionable judgment and depth: others are solid Calvinistic divines, but rather cramped by system and church order; and, with a few exceptions, useful only on a small scale. Others are dry systematics, with little life or unction: and, alas! no small number are avowed Arians and Socinians. A political spirit at present does considerable harm to the cause of vital godliness, and widens our divisions on religious points; an evil which the enemy promotes. In London and some other principal cities and towns, people have abundance of religious advantages; though I fear they do

not proportionably improve them : but in many parts of the country gross darkness prevails in an awful degree.

“ If this rude sketch of things, as they appear to me, stir up you and your friends *to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers*, I have my reward.

“ I find I have not mentioned the Presbyterians ; about whom a native of North Britain may feel particularly interested : but I dare say you know more of them (even as they exist among us) than I do, as a body of men. All I know rank with the best sort of dissenters. With best wishes,

“ Your's sincerely,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

In reading this letter, it will be borne in mind that it was written nearly thirty years ago. The writer would, no doubt, have joyfully and thankfully acknowledged, that, in the period which has since elapsed, a great improvement has taken place in almost all the bodies of professed Christians whom he mentions.—Had he himself revised his letter for the press, he would also certainly have noticed the existence of many *excellent* individuals, as well as of a large body of “well-meaning” people among the different classes of “Methodists.”—The “Presbyterians” will, of course, not be confounded with the Unitarians, who often assume that name.—By the “low experience,” spoken of, must be understood one in which, though it is hoped that the existence of Christian graces may be traced, yet they are acknowledged to be almost out of exercise.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Chapel Street,
July 2, 1796.

“ I do not think it possible for me to write more than a few lines with the parcel which you ordered, as I go out of town on Monday, and am liable now to be every moment interrupted. . . .

“ It certainly gives me heartfelt satisfaction to learn that the Lord, in any way, makes use of my poor labours to promote his cause, in the least degree : but, though I sometimes want, and always like, these cordials, yet medicines of a rougher species are more generally suited to my case, as pride and vain glory are predominant rank weeds, which my heart brings forth abundantly. I am, however, very sensible that humiliating dispensations often tend to dejection, and then *the hands hang down, and the knees wax feeble* : till some word spoken in season gives encouragement, and animates to diligence.—Upon the whole, I do not mean to neglect my health, and I hope I do not : but I believe no man does exactly enough, and not too much. We all, or most us, err on both sides frequently. Whether my life be of any peculiar use or not, it is my *duty* to use proper means of preserving it ; and that sense of duty will suffice to influence me to act according to my conviction of what is right.

“ I very much rejoice in the earnestness shown by persons of different descriptions to send the gospel among the poor benighted pagans ; and I hope the Lord is about to answer the prayers which I, as well as many others, have been making to him for years. My situation, however, as a minister of

the establishment prevents me, by considerations of expediency, from fully uniting with a society¹ which is looked upon with jealousy by our staunch churchmen, especially our rulers. At the same time I feel it incumbent on me to be cautious how I commit myself in a business which is under the management of persons varying in their views, and in their measure of respectability. Hence I am constrained to be considerably a stranger to the persons selected for missionaries, and to the interior of the management; though I am privately a steady advocate for the institution, and contribute my mite to the cause. In my situation, I cannot make any public collections, or take any other ostensible measures: but my few steady friends liberally support them. I have no doubt that the Lord will eventually bring good out of the design: but probably he may seem first to frown upon it; for it appears to me that many are too sanguine, do not sufficiently count their cost, have not wisdom equal to their zeal, and lean more to favourable providential appearances, and second causes, than to the omnipotent operation of the Holy Spirit. They do not seem sufficiently aware that neither Satan, nor the carnal heart, will suffer the kingdom of darkness to be subverted or assailed without the most determined and tremendous opposition; that it is one thing to teach natural men natural knowledge, and another to expose their vices and superstitions, and attack their consciences; that the

¹ It can hardly be necessary to observe that the London Missionary Society, instituted in the preceding year, is intended.— See above, p. 155—157.

missionaries themselves are men of like passions with others, and the intended post peculiarly dangerous, &c. In short, I admire the zeal and uprightness of many concerned, and am persuaded God will eventually bless them: but I have my doubts about many of their measures; and have an idea that disappointments and delays will be employed to teach the parties concerned patience, meekness, humility, prudence, and simplicity; and that, when some begin to think the cause is about to miscarry, a greater, and more entire, and more explicit reliance on the Holy Spirit, and a more *self-annihilating* reference of the matter to God, will make way for the desired success. No doubt the leading persons rather differ in character; and perhaps the most spiritual and most wise have not the greatest influence: but I trust all this will be working itself clear; and the Lord will show that it is his work, that he will employ his own instruments, and that it shall be effected *not by might, nor by power, but by his own Spirit*.—I should think that the several societies in Scotland might so far concur with this in London, as to be mutually helpful: but probably it will be best not to incorporate themselves with it. . . .

“The cause of the gospel seems to gain ground in England: but, alas! infidelity, on the one hand, and a bad mixture of antinomianism, on the other, excite many alarms in some of us for the rising generation.

“I have need to apologise for writing so hastily and inaccurately on such important subjects: but I am much straitened for time, and have only given my rough thoughts upon them, which you

will read with grains of allowance.—With best wishes and prayers for your increasing comfort and progress in the divine life, I remain, dear Sir,

“Your sincere friend and servant,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel-street.
Nov. 25, 1796.

..... “I APPREHEND that the energy of evangelical principles in producing holiness, both of heart and life, is the grand thing to be insisted on by the true friends of the gospel, at all times, but especially in such a day as the present. Nothing can convince more sober people that our doctrines are worth contending for, unless we can show them their inseparable connexion with real good works: nothing can stop the mouths of reviling enemies and scoffers, but the unanswerably silencing language of the holy lives uniformly led by those who profess the doctrines of grace. *Within* the professing church numbers are deceived by a form of knowledge, and by an unholy confidence and selfish joy, for want of attending duly to this subject: others are kept low, and continue comparatively unfruitful, because they are not suitably impressed with its importance: and, *without*, multitudes have their prejudices riveted, inquirers are stumbled, and despisers are emboldened, by what they witness among professors; which confirms their notion that the doctrines of grace tend to laxity of morals, and consequently are useless or pernicious—*What do ye more than others?* our Lord says to his disciples and to each of us. With our principles, hopes, privileges, obligations, ex-

ample, and assistances, we certainly shall, if we act consistently, *do more than others*: and whatever tends to promote the peace and purity of the church, or the stability, fruitfulness, and comfort of believers, as effectually tends to spread the gospel, as preaching to careless sinners, or sending missionaries into distant regions. *These ought we to do, and not to leave the other undone.* I never yet saw a few consistent, peaceable, exemplary believers in any place, but they won over, in time, some of their neighbours and relations, and rendered the gospel respected even by *those without*: but I have repeatedly seen a company of high professors, zealous for doctrines, and loud in disputes, but lax in their practice, who have set numbers against the gospel, and made it despised and hated, more than usual, by all around them. In this day of infidelity, in which Satan is inspiring his servants to uncommon exertions against the whole fabric of Christianity, books and sermons will do little, unless we can oppose to his progress, not only theoretical discourses on the tendency of the gospel, but also appeals to facts concerning its efficacy in rendering men *holy in all manner of conversation*. Our children, servants, or neighbours will be better preserved from infidelity, and more led to think of religion, by witnessing and *feeling* that the gospel produces happy effects on us, especially in our conduct towards them, than by all we can say. Thus we make a lodgment in their consciences, which they cannot get rid of. If they see us happier and better than other men, they cannot but *feel* the difference, even if they would willingly deny it: but, if they can fancy

themselves about as good without the gospel as we are with it, nature will lead them to slight it without remorse.—Our conduct also must show men what we mean by conversion, a new creation, being born of God, &c. We must embody such subjects, and be living examples and illustrations of them. We want more preachers, and should *pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest*: but preachers and sermons of the cast just described are most important; and *thus* all ought to preach daily. Christians of this kind will be the honoured instruments of reviving religion, and diffusing it into distant lands, as well as of handing it down to posterity.¹

“But I have dwelt so long on this subject, that I have not room to discuss that which you particularly mentioned. However, I do not feel myself much grieved on that account; as the cultivation of the Christian temper at large is the best preparative both for *Christian conversation*, and the improvement of every talent. A few words spoken by a man of eminent piety, integrity, and benevolence, will go further than the most exquisite speech of a doubtful character. Even imperfections will be overlooked in the manner, when a man is credited for his sincerity and good will. A real desire to glorify God and edify man by our discourse, with daily meditation on the scriptures, and prayers for heavenly wisdom, will generally lead a man to adopt such methods as suit *him*: for no rules suit all persons. Though levity should be excluded, yet I own I think cheerfulness and good will so

¹ Isa. lviii. 8—14. lxi. 3, 4.

essential, that I would rather see too much sprightliness than any appearance of unsociableness and moroseness—especially when the former is known to be a man's natural disposition: for then [when it is altogether suppressed,] it is thought religion has made him ill-tempered.—I think addresses to the heart and conscience go further than discussions of doctrine; that religious subjects should be introduced gently, not forcibly; and that we should be careful not to get engaged in argument for which we are not competent.

“ I can only add that I remain

“ Your affectionate friend and servant,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Chapel Street,
Jan. 3, 1797.

..... “ I REJOICE to hear of the success of the gospel in any place, and by any instruments; but especially when *ministers* are raised up to preach it. May the Lord grant that your friend the clergyman, and you, and I may all meet in heaven! and may numbers attend us, whom God hath made us the instruments of bringing along with us! For not only ministers are thus instrumental to the salvation of others, but every consistent Christian, by his example, prayers, conversation, and efforts in various ways, shares the same honourable privilege: and, should but one soul be won to Christ by the endeavours of a whole life, that one may be useful to others after our death, and the fruit may, and probably will, remain and increase on earth to the good of others, to the end of time; while the gracious recompense is enjoyed by us in heaven.

On the other hand, if we disgrace the gospel, or imbibe and propagate pernicious principles, the fatal effects may remain, and be diffused further and wider, long after we leave the world. So important is the conduct of a professed disciple of Christ! and such need have we *to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation!*

“Indeed, if the Lord should weigh our feeble attempts in the balance of his perfect law, the best of them must condemn us: and, if he made no use of any but Christians of great attainments, we might sit down in discouragement. But, *where there is a willing mind, it is accepted, according to what a man hath:* and he blesses his own truth, not *because* we speak it, but *notwithstanding* that *we* speak it, *because* it is his own truth. He works by feeble instruments, and generally prefers such as man despises, *that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men.* Much more then will he work by those who think meanly of their own attainments and services, rather than by those who are *wise in their own eyes*, and think highly of themselves. Even the Saviour was *the stone which the builders rejected*, before he was *made the head of the corner:* he *humbled himself even to the death of the cross*, before, in our nature, he was exalted to the throne of glory. Even the manifest imperfections and failings of upright persons do not render them unmeet to be employed in doing good to others. We may pull *a beam* out of another’s eye, though we have *a mote* in our own; though *a beam* in our own eye will render us unfit to pull *a mote* out of our brother’s eye. If we be evidently humbled when we have done wrong, and ready to acknowledge the offence

we have been drawn into, those among whom we live will see the difference between us and such as do wrong, persist in it, and excuse it. It is so natural to us all to err, and so contrary to nature to own our faults, that I have known instances in which I have gained upon even *those without*, or at least, upon very doubtful characters, by acknowledging that I had been to blame in my conduct towards them.

“As self-knowledge, arising from an increasing knowledge of God, his spiritual law, and our obligations, and from diligent self-examination, must produce increasing humility; and as Satan will aim to graft a temptation to discouragement, in our attempts to do good, upon our humbling discoveries of our own sinfulness, the deceitfulness of our hearts, and the corrupt mixtures in our duties: these considerations seemed suited to counterbalance that effect. I have seen many, through a deep sense of their own sinfulness, discouraged even from speaking, writing, or attempting any thing for the good of their nearest relations: nay, they have even thought it would be presumption in such unworthy creatures to pray for others: and I have, at times, felt somewhat of the same kind myself, and do still on some occasions. I have known very good men afraid to exert themselves, not lest they should *seem* vain-glorious, but because they felt so strong a propensity to this and other evils, mixing with their exertions. But, if we must not move till we can do it with perfect decorum, we may sit still till we die. We should therefore remember that we are under a covenant of grace. A merciful father will accept, and even recompense, such services as a severe master would

punish. But he that buries his talent is *a wicked and slothful servant*. We should study the duties of our several relations, the talents committed to our stewardship, and the dangers to which we are peculiarly exposed : and, in the spirit of faith and prayer, should be *steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*.—May we spend this year more profitably than any heretofore!

“ Your affectionate friend and servant,

“ THOS. SCOTT.”

“ Chapel-street,
May 19, 1797.”

IN this letter the writer, in answer to inquiries made of him concerning his situation and circumstances, sketches his own history to the completion of his Commentary, and the occurrences which followed with respect to that work, in perfect accordance with what has been since published in his Life ; and then proceeds :

“ Had it not been that I could not raise money to print my volume of sermons (1796,) without borrowing, and had no right to risk the property of others, I should not, I think, have submitted to solicit subscriptions for the work even by general proposals : and, when it was published, I found the printers and publishers much more punctual in their demands, than the subscribers and booksellers in their payments, which reduced me to serious difficulties ; though I have got my money uncommonly well since.—I believe I may claim the honour of having done, and doing, as much work for nothing as any man in my line ; and I

can assure you that I should, humanly speaking, have been several hundred pounds richer than I am, had I never published a book in my life. I do not, however, repent: for I trust I have been more useful that way than by preaching.—I have almost always found those with whom I have dealt too deep for me in making bargains;¹ and the desire of publishing cheap has led me sometimes to publish *too* cheap; though, upon the whole, I have not lost materially by any publication except the Bible; and am in general rather a gainer: but, if I have gained 200*l.* by other books, I lost above 700*l.* at once by that. I only wonder that a man who was just before without any property could lose so much, and not lose his credit, or even his liberty.... But I can say with Jacob, The Lord hath *fed me all my life long*; and, *having food and raiment, let us be therewith content*. I have maintained my family decently, and kept up my credit fully, during above twenty years, since I first cast myself on God's providence, by following the dictates of my conscience, and the path of duty,² and have been enabled to help many others likewise. My losses never troubled me, except when I could hardly answer the demands made on me, and the sense of being in debt disquieted me. I have all sins in my heart; and, among the rest, have often to conflict with covetousness: but it is not my *easily besetting sin*; and my trials in that respect have scarcely been felt, compared with

¹ It may be due to the present proprietors of his Bible, and publishers of his Works, to say that this was written before my father had any dealings with them.

² See Life, p. 101, 102. (103.)

others that respect my ministry and domestic concerns ;¹ especially the death of relations, frequent sicknesses in my family, and the pain I feel on account of unconverted friends. I do not feel the least anxiety to be rich, or to see my children rich : nor do I fear but they will be provided for, if they act properly. . . . I am surrounded on all sides with mercies ; if I had but a patient, contented, and thankful heart. *Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life :* and I trust *I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.* And I own, if I may but be helped to pay my way, and live according to my present plan, I had rather it should be said after my death, ‘He worked hard, and died poor,’ than that ‘He left some thousands behind him :’ for, though it will then nowise affect me, yet it may more favourably impress those that take up any of my publications.—I would therefore set up my *Ebenexer : hitherto the Lord hath helped me.* I verily believe that I have not had one loss, disappointment, or mortification, more than my stout spirit required : and I sometimes think that, in heaven, I shall thank God more for my medicines, than for my meals or cordials : because I should have chosen the latter, and I prayed for them ; but he forced the other on me, as absolutely necessary, though I would fain have been without them.

“ Having dwelt so long on these subjects, I have no room, though I took a larger sheet than usual,

¹ He thinks it needful to explain this in a postscript ; that “ in domestic life he had been peculiarly comfortable, except as death or sickness had intervened.”

to descant on others. The case you mention ¹ is lamentable. Alas, how many such do we hear of! and how loudly do they call on us to *watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation; and, while we think we stand, to take heed lest we fall.*—You know the scriptural rules; *From such withdraw thyself—that they may be ashamed.* This, in the first instance, is necessary to stop the mouths of enemies—that the blame may rest on the man, not on the gospel; and to humble and abase him, in order to his recovery, if there be life in his soul. But the rules also of *restoring, in the spirit of meekness, such as are overtaken in a fault; and of saving with fear, plucking them out of the fire, hating the garment spotted with the flesh;* will occur to you. Hatred of the sin; fear of being polluted, or of disgracing the cause; trembling over the sinner, yet longing, praying, and trying for his recovery; are peculiarly important.—I hope the Lord will overrule it for good; especially in teaching ministers to insist more on practical subjects in connexion with evangelical truth.

“Any thing in my way that I can do for you in town you may command.—With Christian respects to my unknown friends,

“I remain, dear sir,

“Your’s affectionately,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

This renewed notice of my father’s difficulties and losses, incurred in giving his publications, particularly his Commentary, to the world, fur-

¹ The fall of a popular preacher.

nishes the occasion of remarking, that it would be a very improper use made of this part of his history, should any one be emboldened to involve himself in a similar manner, by observing how Mr. Scott was carried through his embarrassments. A man must be fully assured indeed, perhaps more fully assured than previously to trial it is possible to become, that his motives are equally pure, and his integrity and firmness of mind equally great, before he can be warranted to follow a path into which my father was imperceptibly beguiled, rather than induced deliberately to enter. On this subject I most readily admit the remarks of a reviewer of his Life :

“Few persons would have come out of such transactions as he did, without suffering either in their conscience or in their character, or in both. It is a perilous thing for a minister to be very deeply involved in the speculations of authorship, but still more so in pecuniary responsibilities. Their operation on the character is more frequently the reverse of that which they appear to have had on that of Mr. Scott, whose spirituality of mind was but promoted by circumstances tending to destroy it; who was but humbled by disappointments which would have made many men sordid and querulous; and who found matter for thankfulness when others would have desponded. His rare integrity and simplicity of mind carried him through the consequences of his own” want of caution, “and his very mistakes were overruled for the most important benefit to others. But he paid dearly for it in the interim; and a man of less strength of mind and firmness of principle would

probably have fallen a victim to his imprudence. We have no doubt that Mr. Scott would himself sanction, were he living, this view of the circumstances.”¹

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
October 20, 1797.

“THE date of your letter reminds me that I have too long delayed to answer it: but my family was at Margate when I received it; for some time after I went thither and returned by sea every week;² and, since we all got settled again at home, I have been but poorly in health, and engaged in a variety of ways. However, I lost no time in transmitting your orders to the proper quarters, and I hope they were duly attended to.

“I received also your kind present of Mr. Anderson’s book on faith; and, though I have not yet read the whole of it, I am sufficiently informed of his scheme to give an opinion on it; because it is a subject which I have studied more than any other for many years.—In general I do not differ from him any thing like so much as I do from Mr. Booth’s ‘Glad Tidings,’³ and from many things in Hervey and Marshall:⁴ yet in some points I differ from him, and in others I think his views contracted and confused. I apprehend that the writers who have gone on that plan do

¹ Eclectic Review, Dec. 1822, p. 502, 503.

² Life, p. 319—322. (327—331.)

³ Ibid. p. 313. (322.)

⁴ Ibid. p. 598, 643. (612, 661.)

not much enter into the apostle's views of faith, as stated and exemplified, in its nature and effects, in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. They confine the exercise of faith very much to one single article; and commonly confound it with *hope*: they do not properly distinguish between dead and living faith; and they scarcely leave room for the difference between weak and strong faith, because they confound the *certainty* of the things, in themselves, with the *assurance* we have of them. The former is always the same, the latter is proportioned to the strength of our faith.—But, having written a book on the subject,¹ I shall not fill my paper with further observations, except as they arise out of your letter.

“ You say, ‘We teach that Christ and all his benefits are *made over* to every one that hears the gospel.’ Then it follows that they are the sinner's before he believes, and will continue his though he should never believe.—I teach, that Christ and all his benefits are *proposed* and *offered* to all that hear the gospel: that some, left to themselves, *refuse him that speaketh*; others, ‘through grace, obey the call,’ accept the invitation, believe the testimony, and come to Christ; and that the blessings are ‘made over’ to these, and to these exclusively. *Let him that is athirst, that will, come, take, and drink*: but let him not fancy himself *athirst* and *willing*, and imagine the blessings *his own*, while he neglects *to come, take, and drink*.—I think my view gives quite as much encouragement to all that want encouraging, as

¹ ‘Warrant and Nature of Faith.’

the other statement; and, if I mistake not, it is more consistent with the general tenor of scripture, and not so liable to soothe men's consciences into a false peace and a presumptuous confidence. —It was in this point especially, that from the first I was compelled to dissent from Mr. Hervey:¹ and, after about twenty years' study and observation, in situations peculiar suited for *experiment*, I am more than ever confirmed in my opinion, and rendered deeply sensible of the wide-spread efficacy of the other statement, in deceiving men's souls, and in bringing in a loose, superficial gospel, to the unspeakable dishonour of the Christian religion. My whole ministry and writings have uniformly been directed to counteract these principles, though not in a way of controversy: and, instead of thinking that Mr. Marshall's book² has been very useful, I consider it as having been of very bad consequence to numbers. Many, I doubt not, have got benefit from its contents, because much good is contained in it: but its *system*, fairly drawn out, is neither more nor less than false affections, springing from a baseless confidence, effecting, [that is, proposing in this way to effect,] by a natural process, that [purification of heart and] reformation of life, which the scripture ascribes to the new-creating power of the Holy Spirit. To believe that Christ and all blessings *are mine*, previously to all genuine humiliation for sin, is false confidence. This may give rise to many high affections in a selfish heart,

¹ See Force of Truth.

² 'The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification.'

which will be good-humoured when pleased, and reconciled to a false notion of the divine character, and to an unscriptural gospel; while yet *the carnal mind is enmity against God.*

“If you wish to understand this subject more fully, read Bellamy’s ‘Letters and Dialogues between Theron, Aspasio, and Paulinus;’ in which, though I disapprove his harsh language, and think he runs into extremes, there is such scriptural argument as never can be answered. But, above all, make it a matter of prayer to the Lord to lead you into the truth, in a point that is peculiarly connected with all experience and practice. Suffice it that I give my opinion; and, in my opinion, it has been the chief error of modern evangelical preaching; in which we have adopted, as pure gospel, the very sentiments which eminent divines of the last age opposed as a most refined and dangerous sort of antinomianism; as many of Flavel’s writings, and those of others that opposed Dr. Crisp, &c. prove. Many good men hold these sentiments; but they are [even to them] of a *relaxing* nature, and I do not think their attainments in sanctification are the greater for them; but they are the *pillow* and the *opiate* of false professors: and, though such will have pillows and opiates, yet I do not wish the friends of Christ to prepare them for them.

“I am almost sorry that I took up the subject, as it carries me too far [in point of room].—I never am shy of any man because I differ from him, provided he will permit me to declare my mind freely; and one may go further in a confidential letter than would be proper in print.

“The patients in the Lock Hospital are the refuse of this sink of wickedness, (the metropolis,) especially the wretched women. About five hundred are cured annually. I preach twice a week to them in the wards, as plainly as possible; besides their attendance on public worship. We can tell little of the effects on those who leave us; though I know of a little, and am persuaded there is a great deal more, good done. But I have been enabled to establish another charity¹ on a small scale, for such women as when cured, express a desire to reform. We have now living at least ten steady Christians of some years’ standing, who were thus brought out. Others have died happy, and many are living creditably in service; though our disappointments are numerous. In short our charity (the hospital and asylum together) is a Bethesda, *a house of mercy* to the bodies and souls of the vilest and most wretched of the species, and I think peculiarly *evangelical*.

“I can only add that I shall be glad to hear from you either on the subject of this letter, or on that you refer to; though I cannot promise to enter particularly into the former.—I remain with great sincerity,

“Your affectionate friend and servant,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

With the remark that “one may go further in a confidential letter than would be proper in print,” I would (for my own justification,) com-

¹ The Lock Asylum, founded 1787.

bine that which I elsewhere had occasion to make, that, "under the sanction and authority which *death* has added to his character," the writer of these letters "may now speak some things publicly, which perhaps propriety or expediency required that he should before say only in private to his friends."¹

In illustration of that part of the preceding letter which speaks of "effecting," or proposing to effect, by a sort of "natural process," namely by means of "false affections springing from a baseless confidence," that change "which the scripture ascribes to the new-creating power of the Holy Spirit," I shall take the liberty of here copying from my father's edition of the Pilgrim's Progress, a pretty long note, to which I should be glad to draw attention.

"When believers, 'in the warmth of their affections,' feel the humbling, melting, endearing, and sanctifying effects of contemplating the glory of the cross, and the love of Christ in dying for sinners; and consider themselves as the special objects of that inexpressible compassion and kindness; they are apt to conclude that the belief of the propositions, that *Christ loves them and died for them*, and that *God is reconciled to them*, produces the change by its own influence; and would affect the most carnal hearts in the same manner, could men be persuaded to embrace it. For they vainly imagine that apprehensions of the severity of divine justice, and the dread of vengeance, are the sources of the enmity which sinners manifest

¹ Life, p. 613. (627.)

against God.—Hence very lively and affectionate Christians have frequently been prone to sanction the unscriptural tenet, that the justifying act of faith consists in *assuredly believing that Christ died for ME, in particular, and that God loves ME*; and to consider this *appropriation as preceding repentance*, and every other gracious disposition; and as, in some sense, *the cause of regeneration*, winning the heart to love God, and to rejoice in him, and in obeying his commandments.—From this doctrine others have inferred, that, if all men, and even devils too, believed the love of God to them, and his purpose at length to make them happy, they would be won over from rebellion against him, which they persist in from a mistaken idea that he is their implacable enemy: and they make this one main argument in support of the salutary tendency of the final restitution scheme. But all these opinions arise from a false and flattering estimate of human nature; for the carnal mind hates the *scriptural* character of God,¹ and the glory displayed in the cross, even more than that which shines forth in the fiery law.—Indeed, if we take away the offensive part of the gospel; the honour it puts upon the law and its awful sanctions, and the exhibition it makes of the divine justice and holiness; it will give the proud carnal heart but little umbrage: if we admit that men's aversion to God and religion arises from *misapprehension*, and not from desperate wickedness, many will endure the doctrine. A recon-

¹ “His real character, and not a mistaken notion of him.”
Warrant and Nature of Faith.

ciliation in which God assures the sinner that he has forgiven him, even before he has repented of his sins, will suit man's pride; and, if he has been previously frightened, a great flow of affections may follow: but the event will prove that they differ essentially from spiritual love of God, gratitude, holy joy, and genuine humiliation; which arise from a true perception of the glorious perfections of God, of the righteousness of his law and government, of the real nature of redemption, and of the odiousness and desert of sin. In short, all such schemes *render regeneration needless*; or substitute something else in its stead, which is effected by a natural process, and not by the new-creating power of the Holy Spirit.—But, when this divine agent has communicated life to the soul, and a capacity is produced of perceiving and relishing spiritual excellency, the enmity against God receives a mortal wound: from that season, the more his real character and glory are known, the greater spiritual affection will be excited, and a proportionable transformation into the same holy image effected. Then the view of the cross, as the grand display of all the harmonious perfections of the Godhead, softens, humbles, and meliorates the heart: while the persuasion of an interest in these blessings, and an admiring sense of having received such inconceivable favours from this glorious and holy Lord God, will still further elevate the soul above all low pursuits, and constrain it to the most unreserved and self-denying obedience. But, while the heart remains unregenerate, the glory of God and the gospel will either be misunderstood, or hated in proportion as it is dis-

covered.—Such views and affections, therefore, as have been described, spring from special grace; and are not produced by the natural efficacy of any sentiments, but by the immediate influences of the Holy Spirit; so that even true believers, though habitually persuaded of their interest in Christ, and of the love of God to them, are only at times thus filled with holy affections: nor will the same contemplations constantly excite similar exercises; but they often bestow much pains to get their minds affected by them, in vain; while at other times a single glance of thought fills them with the most fervent emotions of holy love and joy.”¹

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
February 9, 1798.

..... “I WAS very much pleased with the contents of your letter, and with your way of stating the meaning of the *terms* to which I had objected. Many of these expressions would be harmless enough, if men were more simple, teachable, and upright: but the heart is *deceitful above all things and desperately wicked*; and Satan is continually employing *all the deceivableness of unrighteousness*, in order to impose upon men with the semblance of truth. He is ever aiming to mix poison

¹ Scott's Works, vol iii. p. 395—397: or his edit. of the Pilgrim's Progress, 12mo. p. 296, 297: 8vo. part ii. p. 71, 72.—See also observations upon the same subject, and on “schemes of preaching” formed on this erroneous view, in Warrant and Nature of Faith, part ii. sec. 3: Works vol. i. p. 474—477.

with our food ; and according to the prevailing sentiments of the more religious sort of persons, he accommodates his devices, making some *damnable heresy* palatable and unsuspected, by grafting it on, or infusing it into, the doctrine that most currently passes with apparently serious people : just as an artful destroyer of vermin mixes his poison with the very food of which they are severally most fond. Such plans of deception, such methods of keeping men asleep in sin, as succeed to the uttermost where the precious truths of the gospel are not known, are of little avail where those truths are generally known and considered as essential to true religion. But shall the enemy, then, here give up his designs, and make no further attempts to deceive ? Has he nothing in the human heart congenial to devices of another kind ? If men can no longer be lulled asleep in carnal security, either without any religion, or by superstition, forms of worship, or pharisaical self-righteousness ; does he give it up as a lost case ? By no means. He has many ways of effecting his work of deception yet remaining. But, alas ! numbers, both of teachers and writers, seem *ignorant of his devices*. As a friend of mine expresses it, ‘ They barricado the front door, and keep guard there incessantly, but leave the back doors and windows unguarded and unclosed ? ’ They have discovered that the human heart is prone to self-righteous pride, but seem not aware that it is equally prone to the love of sinful pleasures and worldly objects ; and that the Pharisee and the Antinomian lodge more peaceably in the same dwelling, than we are apt to suppose.—The grand object of aversion to the

carnal heart in the gospel is, the honour put upon the strict and holy law of God by the obedience and death of Christ; which shows the evil of sin so fully and unanswerably, that it proclaims the strictest moralist and formalist so deserving of condemnation, that he must have perished if Christ had not thus obeyed and died; and must still perish, unless, renouncing all other confidences, he avail himself of this provision, in the same manner with those very immoral wretches whom he so proudly disdains: nay that, if the vilest of these believes in Christ, he will certainly be saved, while the most amiable and respectable unbeliever will perish deservedly and without mercy. This forms the grand objection of the carnal mind to the gospel: but, when an unrenewed heart is driven by argument, and unanswerable scriptural testimonies, from the ground of direct opposition, it immediately lies open to Satan's attempts to substitute a form of knowledge, a dead faith, false affections, and a presumptuous hope, instead of its former confidence. *The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be:* and its enmity to the purity and spirituality of the precept is as strong, as its enmity to the indiscriminate sentence of final condemnation which it denounces. Nor can this enmity be reconciled: it must be crucified and destroyed. When, therefore, terror and conviction drive a man to disavow his former self-justifying pleas, and to allow that mercy alone can save him; his enmity to God and his law will make him seek deliverance from its commanding authority, as well as from its condemning sentence:

and in this way, as well as in many others, *Satan is transformed into an angel of light, and his ministers into ministers of righteousness*: and, alas! many good men endorse *bad bills*.—Direct avowed antinomianism is too scandalous to be general: barefaced rascals do comparatively little mischief in the common state of society: but, by carrying certain parts of religion to an extreme, as if men could not use too strong words in stating and extolling them, or be disproportionately zealous for them; other parts, of equal importance, are run down or kept out of sight. In this way a most subtile, pernicious, and disgraceful bias to *practical*, and in some sense to *doctrinal*, antinomianism has become very general, by means of unscriptural terms, and methods of stating the doctrines of the gospel.—The head may be the principal part of a man; but it is not the whole man. The doctrine of justification is not the whole of Christianity; nor being justified the whole of salvation.—This disproportionate way of teaching only balances parties, and rules by thus balancing them: whereas the scripture attacks equally all the corruptions of the carnal heart, and gives no quarter to any of them.

“I remain very sincerely,

“Your affectionate friend and servant,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
May 12, 1798.

.... “THE account you give of yourself is very interesting, and suggests many important instructions. It confirms me in my sentiments respect-

ing education, in which I am deemed singular. I am very averse to public schools: and I never sent any one of my children to school in my life, because I thought the danger to their morals and religious principles vastly more than compensated all the advantages to be derived. When parents are really pious, and can possibly do it, they had better give their children an education at home, defective as to learning, than run the risk of sending them to situations where their very advantages are unspeakably dangerous, and where the boldest sinner will commonly be the example, and give the tone to the manners of all the boys; and where they will be almost sure to corrupt one another, whatever pains a master may bestow.

“One might go through every stage of your history with similar observations.—The danger connected with the love and pride of science, with the choice of agreeable companions,—agreeable, perhaps, because flatterers, or because they are congenial in disposition to our own predominant carnal propensities; with the removal of children from under the inspection of pious parents, when it can be avoided, &c. . . .

“In many respects your account shows you to have been naturally very much like me in the turn and bias of your mind; and I was reminded of many past transactions by reading your letter. . . . In one thing especially I mark a similitude: my bad history would have been still worse, had I not been restrained by want of money, and want of effrontery, from acting out what was conceived in my heart: and I seldom fail, several times in the course of the week, to thank the Lord for thus

keeping me from rendering myself and others miserable and mischievous.

“ There is a notion very common, that a studious disposition, or what I call the love and pride of science, preserves a man from sensual inclinations or indulgences : and so it may as far as pride of character is concerned ; but I believe no further. It is, I apprehend, very common for the most scientific persons to be by turns, in secret, very sensual : and, in short, though there are various differences of character, nothing can preserve any man, but a serious regard to the all-seeing eye of God, and a diligent use of his appointed means, in dependence on his all-sufficient grace. What discoveries will the day of judgment make ! How many through life stand high for moral virtue, because they artfully and successfully elude detection ! And how often is the detection itself of some concealed vice the first thing that excites suspicion ; while the person himself has for years been conscious that he was quite another character than he was supposed to be !

“ The deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart ; the artifices of Satan and his instruments ; the inefficacy of forms, about which men so zealously contend ; the corrupt motives of many *conversions* of this external kind, which have the fairest appearance of impartiality, serious examination, and conviction ; the difference between convictions, impressions, and temporary earnestness, and a real change of heart ; the sovereignty and superabundance of divine grace ; the excellence of true Christianity ; the unspeakable advantage of a pious education : these and several other

particulars might be selected as topics on which to enlarge. But it is not needful, and I have neither time nor room. The Lord has indeed dealt most wonderfully with you ; and I trust your future life will show that *the grace bestowed on you has not been in vain* ; but that he intended to make you not only *blessed*, but *a blessing*.—I see no reason to doubt the reality of your humiliation. If you thought it deep enough, I should doubt. But you seem rather to confound *humiliation* with *terror* and *distress* : the former is essential to repentance, the latter merely circumstances : repentance may be without them, and they without repentance.

“ Believe me, in great haste,

“ Your affectionate and faithful

“ friend and servant,

“ THOS. SCOTT.”

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Chapel Street,
May 26, 1798.

. “ I THANK you for your kind inquiries about my health, it is no worse than usual ; for I never had strong health : and for nearly twenty years have been very much subject to asthma and bilious complaint, which require me to use such means as often keep me languid. But on the whole I am better in some respects than I was some years since ; though I do not seem capable of quite so much work. During the twelve years and a half that I have been in London, I have never once been laid by on the Lord’s day ; though I have often been apparently unfit for my work :

but the Lord has helped me through; and I am best when employed. . . .

“—— the bookseller has bought the whole stock in hand of the Bible, and at most we shall not divide two shillings and sixpence in the pound on the original publisher's debts, which to me were 842*l*. If I could have raised the money, I should have purchased the residue of the work : but perhaps, indeed *certainly*, it was best I should not.¹

“I shall be glad to hear from you more at length; and, as my engagements will permit, shall be happy to give my sentiments on any subject you desire, and to make any communications in my power.—I trust the Lord is your guide and teacher: he hath done great things for you, as an earnest of greater; and I hope it will be found that he means you to be an instrument of good to many others also.

“I remain,

“Your sincere and faithful

“friend and servant,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
Aug. 29, 1798.

“I OUGHT to have answered your last sooner: but at this season of the year I am seldom capable of so much application as at other times, and am therefore very ready to shift off any thing that can be postponed.

“As I have not heard any more from you, I hope the Lord has so ordered matters that it will

¹ See Life, p. 274 and 285. (281 and 292.)

not be necessary for you to go abroad, which in your present circumstances seems undesirable : yet we are very incompetent judges in such matters. Who could previously have thought that St. Paul's tedious imprisonment would have been *for the furtherance of the gospel*? Should you, therefore, after all your reluctance, be unable to decline the service with propriety, I trust it will be overruled for the glory of God, and for your own good, and future usefulness ; and what is our *cross* does not often prove our *snare*. The acquisition of the French language may be a very important advantage, in a variety of circumstances. I have an idea that it is not at all improbable, that France itself may, within a course of years, be one of the best fields for missionaries. But I will not enlarge at present on that.

“Your account of the manner in which the Lord has hitherto led you is highly satisfactory : and also your views of the importance of retirement, and of much personal secret religion ; to which an over-eagerness in studying even religious books, an indulged delight in pious company and converse, and a disproportionate frequency in attending on public or social worship, may often prove great hindrances. When the mind is upon the whole properly disposed, we are seldom hindered in the first instance by gross evils, at which we revolt : but various things, not evil in themselves, nay, perhaps good in their place, become *the little foxes that spoil the vines*,¹ and prevent fruitfulness, as well as make way for the enemy to sug-

¹ Sol. Song ii. 15.

gest further temptations. We are naturally most indisposed to what is most spiritual: secret communion with God is of all duties most spiritual: we therefore find it peculiarly difficult to keep our hearts thoroughly close to it; and the enemy will use every method of rendering us formal and remiss in it. But you are *forewarned*, and I trust will be *fore-armed*. Depend upon it, every thing will prosper in the event in a very near proportion to our earnestness and perseverance in prayer: but negligence here will be followed by a declension, perhaps almost unperceived, in all other respects; and will make way for temptations, falls, corrections, darkness, and inward distresses. If, like Jacob, we wrestle with God and prevail, we shall eventually prevail in all our other conflicts.

“ I do not in the least wonder at what you mention concerning your desire for the ministry; and I think it very probable, that the Lord intends in due time thus to employ you. It appears, however, to me, that you should endeavour rather to repress and moderate the desire, than to indulge it at present; at least to aim and pray for a willingness to wait the Lord's time, and to submit to his will as to the event. I should not consider it as any deduction from the prospect of future usefulness, should you meet with various disappointments and delays, and repeatedly seem to have the door shut against you; so as to induce you to leave it calmly in the Lord's hands to determine whether he sees good to employ you or not. I lay a great stress on the apostle's rule, *Not a novice*, or new convert; and deem some time spent in gaining self-acquaintance, know-

ledge of the human heart, and experience both of what is within and what is around us, with other qualifications and endowments for so arduous and important a work, much better than a premature entrance upon it: and, if the Lord have work for us to do, we shall certainly be preserved to do it. I think, however, that it is very right to have an eye to the service continually, and to be aiming to acquire that kind of knowledge which may be peculiarly suited to the character of a minister, as well as that which is profitable to a Christian. And here I should advise you to recede, though with caution, from your strict rule of reading nothing but on religious subjects. I did this for a considerable time: but I think I should have been qualified for various services, for which I am now incompetent, had I set apart a portion of my time, not too large, for acquiring general knowledge. It appears to me that theology is best learned from the scriptures and a few select books; that one often reads very pious works without much enlarging one's fund of knowledge, though they produce a good effect on the heart; that a minister should be continually, if possible, increasing his knowledge, while he watches carefully his heart; and that any sensible book, if read so as to be continually compared with the scriptures, will increase useful knowledge,—namely, that of human nature, of the state of the world, the delusions which prevail, the most plausible objections to our doctrines, the weak side of our way of stating them, and a thousand other things which a well-informed scribe in the law of God knows how to make good use of. I call this

reconnoitring; which is necessary to the commander, though not to the common soldiers. Perhaps a little reading of this kind, such as history, biography, systems of morals, &c. might eventually favour your grand design.—I am not aware of the line in which you have thoughts of obtaining admission. I think I have heard that there are great difficulties in this respect in the established church of Scotland: is it easier among the seceders? or have you any other plan? I throw out these hints, being ready to give my opinion on any thing you may think it worth while to propose to me, as I feel considerably interested in your concerns.

“Your present employment in respect of the Sunday schools seems to promise considerable usefulness, and may prove a step to something further. I should consider it of some importance to proceed with it *decidedly*, yet giving as little offence as possible, without deviating from your grand purpose.—I can give no decided opinion on the method by which your teachers proceed. As far as the children are concerned, it is certainly right to endeavour, by suitable explanations and illustrations, to make the truths inculcated clear and intelligible, and to apply them to their hearts and consciences: yet I easily conceive how, by admitting the presence of other persons, you may fall under the charge of *lay preaching*; and whether some method might not be devised of attaining the object, without exposing yourselves to the censure, or at least to a plausible charge of irregularity, may be worth considering.....

“I could say something on Sunday schools,

had I room. I do not approve of teaching more in them than reading ;¹ and I should be rejoiced to have them under the care of pious persons : but, if you knew how many thousands of children in England are by them taught to read the Bible, and accustomed to go to a place of worship, when otherwise they would have been learning, practising, and teaching all manner of wickedness, you would think this little help something, and something important. With best wishes and prayers,

“ I remain, dear sir,

“ Your affectionate and faithful friend,

“ THOS. SCOTT.”

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Chapel Street,
November 10, 1798.

..... “ I THINK your views in respect of your grand design are very proper ; and, in thus waiting on the Lord, he will no doubt direct you in due time to the best measures, and to that determination which will be most for his glory and your real good.—When I proposed the question concerning the body of Christians among whom you meant to seek admission into the ministry, I was not fully aware of the import of my own inquiry ; for I find the difficulties are in most cases greater than I supposed. I could, as far as I can see, if it were fairly in my line, communicate with your seceders, as a layman, but I am sure I could not conscientiously enter into the engagements required of those whom they ordain. I

¹ That is, not of writing, &c.

believe all parties were wrong in many things, last century; and it seems absurd to make an unqualified approbation of any party, so long since, the *sine quâ non* of ministering in the gospel of Christ at present; when the most able, studious, and pious men can scarcely make up their own minds on so complicated a business; and most men are absolutely incompetent, through want of adequate information, to form any judgment about it.

“ I do not think either great strength of body, or singular talents of mind, are at all essential to the work of the ministry. As to the former, many of the most useful men that ever lived have seemed to think their ill state of health, leading them to speak ‘as dying men to dying men,’ one great means of their usefulness. And, though considerable talents are necessary for some special services, yet God has not generally made much use of them, and they have often been snares, rather than advantages, to the possessors; while men of moderate talents, with humble, simple, zealous minds, have had the greatest success. Besides, we are not competent judges of our own talents: and conscious unworthiness and insufficiency constitute one grand requisite for simplicity of dependence on the Lord in all things.—Classical learning, in the present state of things, is necessary for admission into the ministry; and it is proper that some, or even many, ministers should be classical scholars: but I am of opinion that a good fund of general knowledge, connected with an accurate and enlarged acquaintance with the Bible, and with theology as a science, (all of which

may be attained by one who understands his own native language alone,) are far more useful in the pastoral office, in general circumstances, than a moderate acquaintance with languages can be.— In short, I would have two sorts of ministers: one so completely learned as to be able to meet the enemies of Christianity on that ground, and to be above them at their own weapons: the other, pastors of no other pretensions than to be *scribes well instructed* in the word of God, and the great things of true religion. A smattering of Greek and Latin, or Hebrew, procured by an adult, at a great expense of time, if not of money, that might be better employed, is seldom of much use; and frequently only renders the possessor conceited and dogmatical. But in this we must accommodate to the opinions of those among whom we attempt to obtain admission.

“ I really am incompetent to give any particular advice on the last subject you mention, except that I should be very frank and open in avowing my purpose, not to let regard to worldly interest or credit influence me, in the least, to do or omit any thing, contrary to my conscience; or that so much as seemed to be declining the reproach of Christ. You are perfectly right, that every concession will make way for some other requisition: and, except you can be convinced that some part of your conduct has been justly reprehensible, or needlessly offensive, or intermeddling with things which do not belong to you, your wisdom and safety will consist in making no concessions, but meekly, yet firmly, avowing a purpose of acting up to your conscience, and taking the consequences. In

every thing else concede: here be firm. The axe-head would not have enabled the hewer to cut down the forest, if the trees had decidedly and unanimously refused him a handle: but, that granted, the rest followed. . . . But my paper is full, my time gone, and I am tired.—With best wishes and prayers,

“ I remain,

“ Your’s faithfully and affectionately,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Chapel Street,
May 25, 1799.

. WE have set on foot a new society for missions to Africa and the East by members of the established church: and, as I am a party greatly concerned, and have accepted the office of secretary, it occupies a great deal of my time. Probably we shall engage a set of men to support it, and draw most of our resources from quarters, which are out of the reach of other societies. If you knew any one of a heroical spirit in the cause of Christ and of souls, he might here have an opportunity of exerting himself in that best of services.

“ I have it not at all in my power at present to enter upon the questions about ‘the covenant,’ to which the seceders are so much attached: nor am I qualified, without more study, to give a decided opinion, grounded on convincing arguments, suited to settle the judgment of a serious inquirer. I have always thought it very extraordinary to blend the political disputes of the last century (for from these in great measure the questions origi-

nated,) with the religious profession of the present ; when, in fact, I think the chief fault of the religion of that turbulent time was its close connexion with politics. I do not see how any one can swear to the solemn league and covenant, without engaging for what he knows to be impracticable. I am not very partial to oaths at all, except when absolutely necessary. I cannot see how the oaths of our forefathers can bind us ; or that we have any right to swear in the name of our posterity. The solemn league and covenant seems to me to breathe a severe, if not a persecuting spirit ; and I could not by any means enter into such an engagement : but many wise and good men have thought otherwise ; and I can only judge for myself. . . . In fact, I scarcely know any body of Christians who do not seem to me to require some things, either in respect to communion, or to the ministry, with which I am not satisfied : so that I do not wish to render others so scrupulous as I am myself.

“ With respect to *public covenanting*, I think all we have to do with the sins of the nation, or body we belong to, is, to repent of our own sins, and do our own duties ; and, when we do what we can to prevent or counteract the sins of the nation, we are not answerable for what we cannot help ; and can never be required to engage for what we cannot perform.—Nehemiah was the civil governor, and was doing the duty of his place : and I should think it very different to concur with the civil governor in such an engagement, and to enter into a covenant of this kind without him, or

against him. The other passages relate to *personally* covenanting with the Lord to be his servants, not to public and political covenanting about matters almost inseparable from the government of our country.....

“I pray the Lord to direct you, to counsel, comfort, and prosper you ! and I remain in great haste,

“ Your affectionate friend,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

My father's correspondent here remarks, “ In this and some following letters it will appear, with what judicious views Mr. Scott enters on a subject which to an Englishman must be very strange, and little heard of; namely, the disputes which have subsisted so long among the good people in Scotland, about the covenants and vows of their forefathers during the civil wars with Charles I. These have been a fruitful source of contention from that period down to the present: and, though the controversy is now dying away, yet it is often entangling to the consciences of pious people.”

It appears to be a question among these good people, how far the vows of the forefathers are even now binding upon their posterity of the present generation !

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Chapel Street,
August 28, 1799.

.....“ I HAVE received and read over your present, as a specimen of Scotch divinity, and must say that it is, according to this specimen, extremely heterogeneous. I have traversed, methinks, both the frigid and the torrid zone; the ice and snows

of Zembla, and the burning deserts of Africa. The sermon on *moderation* conveys me about twenty degrees north of Laodicea; and, except that the author marks, as if essential to *zealous* religion, some disgraceful appendages which human infirmity often connects with it, and as he may thus furnish a hint to such as would take away occasion of censure from those who seek occasion, I see nothing worth further notice; and can only lament that things in Scotland so much, in this respect, resemble the too general state of things in England.

“The same observations almost may suffice for the pamphlet on Mr. ———’s tour. I trust it will concur with other things to render the itinerants more circumspect, and more careful to avoid all needless offence. I had taken the liberty to point out some things which I had thought liable to exception, and am happy to say they have altered them. I cannot but consider the design as good; but in Scotland it must meet with immense opposition, from the state of things both among the seceders and in the establishment. The latter too generally, I fear, are opposed to the thing itself: the former seem willing rather to let things remain as they are, or grow worse, than to permit any to attempt a melioration, except in *their* way. *We saw one casting out devils in thy name; but we forbid him, because he followed not with us.*—The author of this pamphlet approaches nearer to the gospel, but seems by no means evangelical.¹

¹ In a letter of September 1, 1800, he says of the “itinerants” here referred to: “I have entirely the same view of your

“The Act, Declaration, and Testimony is indeed a curious book; and, though it brought me little information *de novo*, yet it has so laid together the several things which I had before read detached, and which were scattered and broken in my memory, that it gave me a new or clearer view of the whole subject.—As to doctrines which the new presbytery asserted or protested against, there are not many things in which I should not agree with them: though I think, after allowing or asserting the scripture to be the only rule, they are over-exact in requiring every expression to conform to the Confessions, &c. in the strictest sense they can put upon them; which is not only too magisterial, but is suited entirely to preclude all attempts at a fuller understanding of the scriptures, than our forefathers just emerging from popery had attained.—I differ from them in a few points a little: but their views of Christianity, as to doctrine, far more accord to mine than either those of (many) modern evangelical divines in England, or those of the North American divines.—But what shall I say to the discipline, the divine right of presbytery, the solemn league and covenant, &c.? It seems to me that the connexion of religion with politics is one grand anti-christian abuse which was universally adopted at the reformation, by which modern Christianity is most strikingly discriminated from ancient. The

zealous irregulars in Scotland that you express: but I trust that good will come out of their exertions; and *lukewarmness seems almost the worst symptom in any church*: so we must bear with their defects.”—These persons afterwards gave him much greater dissatisfaction.

foundation of the Anglican church, as laid at the reformation by the authority of prince and parliament, was such as was suited to connect the church too closely with the governing powers, and to give strong temptation to a mercenary time-serving spirit in the clergy, especially the superior orders. And it seems to me, that what I should call sedition made a nest, in which to deposit her eggs and hatch them, in the foundations of the Scotch church, as laid more or less in opposition, direct or indirect, to governors, by the first reformers; and therefore, as human nature is, perpetual contests with civil rulers—contests favourable, perhaps, to liberty, but often both disgraceful and ruinous to vital religion,—must prevail so long as that system is pertinaciously adhered to. The evident faults of the religious opponents have throughout given a *handle*, and afforded an *excuse* for the far, far worse crimes of their oppressors: but, instead of revising and removing what was liable to just objection in their system, the oppressed party have made it a point of conscience to vindicate and retain the whole, by very exceptionable means.

“ Could the divine right of presbyterian government exclusively be established, (and I wonder where they find it in scripture—for I should never have thought of kirk sessions, &c., had *they* not mentioned them;) I think I should (still) not find much difficulty in proving the solemn league and covenant to have implied an unlawful oath; of which they who took it, whether influenced by fear, or principle, or any other motive, ought to have repented. It certainly puts the

presbyterian system on the ground of infallibility, as much as the pope does his decrees, or those of the Romish church. It swears men never to be convinced that one tittle is wrong; or, being convinced, still to abide by it. It reserves to the church or assemblies the right of determining what princes are tyrannical, and what measures oppressive; and of sanctioning, or even exciting, resistance *by arms* to such measures and princes: which is too much like popery in respect of de-throning heretical kings, &c.—The primitive church, however governed, made no resistance when persecuted, and when all her assemblies were scattered;—nay, made no protests: and I cannot reconcile the covenant with the scriptural rules of obeying *the powers that be*.—It likewise implies an oath to propagate or support the presbyterian government in every part, without excepting the most forcible and intolerant measures: and it is certain from the Act, Declaration, &c. that toleration is no part of the plan even of the seceders; though they themselves enjoy their present privileges by toleration. It seems also to imply an oath to propagate the same system in other countries; not only by spiritual weapons, but by carnal power.

“For these and other reasons I deem the oath itself to have been unlawful; and that the national sin of Scotland originally consisted in taking and imposing it; and that they who urged this as a reason why it was null and void were so far right, though wrong in almost every thing else. The instances in scripture of such covenanting were always confined to things previously the duty

of the persons thus engaging; and not only no human inventions were joined with the laws and ordinances of God, but not even any human interpretations were annexed. Exod. xxiv. Deut. xxix. 1 Sam. vii. 2 Kings xi. Nehem. ix, x. This at least is the case except in the last instance referred to, where they are so simple as not to be questionable; and Ezra and Nehemiah were both inspired men. But the solemn league and covenant is an engagement to keep *the tradition of the elders* also: and doubtless many of the Pharisees were as confident that their system was right, as the covenanting presbyterians could be. Such engagements by oath to more than is evidently scriptural, and our bounden duty, are snares to men's consciences; make way for perjury; and, when enforced on large bodies of people, whose characters and judgments must differ, they must of necessity be the occasion, at least, of national sins, and of permanent discord and mutual accusations.

“But, supposing the oath originally lawful, and that those who actually took it did right under the existing circumstances, and were bound by it; what authority had they to bind it on the consciences of their posterity to the remotest generations, who might be placed in very different circumstances, and perhaps be of a very different judgment? This is to perpetuate embittered religious and political controversy, entwined together, as a bequest to posterity; as if it had not been a sufficient curse to that generation.—I am answerable but for my own conduct; and for that of my children only as it originates from mine.—

The implied engagement of parents in baptism, or that of sponsors in our church, though exceptionally expressed, can bind to no more than a proper attention to their own duty respecting the child:¹ and, if the parent or sponsor engage for any thing that is not really included in the baptismal profession, or is merely an appendage to Christianity; the child, when adult, is under no obligation at all from that part of the engagement, and contracts no guilt in disregarding it. Being thus devoted to God, and brought up in the visible church, he is more strongly bound to be a Christian than others; and contracts additional guilt if he renounce Christianity: not because parents or sponsors vowed it, but because God calls him to it by his word—[of which he is informed, and, it is probable, continually does and says things by which he recognizes his obligation]. But, if he think the church of Scotland more pure than the church of England, in which he was baptized; or an independent church more scriptural than either; he is accountable only for the care, impartiality, seriousness, and humility, with which he examines the subject, and draws his conclusions; and the baptismal engagement in no sense binds him to continue a member of the church of England, contrary to his conscience. How then can the solemn league and covenant, sworn to in Scotland a hundred and fifty years ago, bind the present generation, or preclude them from the right of private judgment, and of searching the

¹ And it is so explained in the service: "Ye must remember, that it is your parts and duties to see that this child," &c.

scriptures with an unbiassed mind, and with earnest prayer to be taught in all respects what the truth and will of God are? In my opinion a more absurd notion never was held by wise and good men; nor one more inimical to the real interests, or more injurious to the credit, of Christianity.

“There are many things unscriptural among all parties: but all *staunch* men will have it that they are right in every thing.—For myself, I continue where I am, because I do not know where to mend myself; and because nothing is required of me personally that is contrary to my conscience. I do not deem myself answerable for the sins of others, either in the same nation, or the same church, except I neglect to do my duty in protesting against them, according to my opportunity, station, and call in providence: and I can *here* do something; whereas, by engaging in such disputes, I might do nothing, or mischief.—I am an episcopalian, but not a *prelatist*. I like some things in the presbyterian, and some in the independent plan; which I would adopt into my episcopal plan. Other things I disapprove. I see none [of the plans] to be *jure divino*; and, *till the Spirit be poured upon us from on high*, outward forms will do little.

“I have written a long letter, though very busy. You must excuse incorrectness and plain language: and believe me to be, dear sir,

“Your’s very affectionately,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“P. S. The primitive church quietly did as they thought right, when permitted: and, when not

permitted, as quietly did as they could, preferring suffering to sin, but suffering meekly. If rulers at any time favour spiritual religion, we may avail ourselves of the sunshine: but we should prepare for storms. No laws can secure [the continuance of] spiritual religion.—If a man act, or preach, or write contrary to his voluntary engagements, without declaring that he is convinced he was mistaken, and without giving up the advantages of his engagement; he is deeply criminal. If this become common in a nation, it is a national sin.—Every departure from the faith is very criminal, not [simply or mainly] because of leagues, oaths, &c.; but because it is a contempt of God and his holy word.”

“ Chapel Street,
December 24, 1799.

After detailing various circumstances respecting his Bible, and particularly concerning the copy-right being claimed, or rather seized, by a person who had no shadow of right to it, which reduced him to the necessity of either commencing a law-suit, or printing on his own account, and abstaining from publishing for some years;¹ he says:

“ As you mentioned the subject with apparent anxiety, I thought this statement would not be unwelcome. Though I deem myself treated with great injustice, and though thwarted in my favourite plans, with many unpleasant circumstances, my mind feels peculiarly tranquil. I

¹ Life, p. 275, 276. (282, 283.)

only wish to know my duty; and I think I am ready to give up the whole, if convinced that I ought to do it: but every friend says I ought not. I pity the man whom the devil gets on his hook by the bait of my property; and do sincerely pray God to give him repentance. But he is *an anti-nomian by principle*, which I regard as a hopeless character in general."

"DEAR SIR,

"Chapel Street,
Nov. 9. 1801.

"IF you could see my course of life for one week, you would not wonder at my want of promptitude or punctuality in answering letters. Indeed I am forced to decline all letter-writing, except what is absolutely necessary. I have undertaken a new edition of the Family Bible on a plan which, at the rate I now proceed, it will take me much above three years from the present time to accomplish; and I have already been employed nearly a year and a half. I labour from morning till night every day, as far as other engagements will permit, and still I cannot keep before the printer. I am reluctant to let it go forth without such improvements as I can give it: and, if I adhere to this, I must omit many other things till it be done; and that is so long a season, that I scarcely can look forward to it. I hope, however, it is a good service, and I proceed in it generally with alacrity. Besides this I have this year had many interruptions: my continuance at the Lock is rendered very doubtful: I have been inducted into a small living in the country: and all has added to my engagements, which have overdone me....

“I shall always be glad to hear of you, or from you; and rejoice in hearing of your comfort and usefulness, which I pray may increase very much: and, notwithstanding what I said above, whenever you wish for my opinion on any special question, or when in any other way I can hope that my writing will be of service, I will readily break in on my engagements to write more copiously: but, circumstanced as I am, you must in general be satisfied with short notes, and must be very long-suffering in respect of delays.

“With every good wish, I remain

“Your sincerely affectionate

“friend and servant,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

The edition of the Bible here referred to was that which first received the addition of copious marginal references. In a previous letter (of Sept. 1, 1800,) the author had said of it: “It costs me more time and labour preparing, than it did at first writing: but I trust I am labouring to good purpose, especially to render it in various ways more fit for students of divinity, among whom it has even now some degree of notice.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Aston Sandford,
July 22, 1803.

“My conscience has sometimes, my wife and daughter have often, reproved me for neglecting to write to you, and many a time have I resolved, or at least intended, to write, before I received your letter. But imagine to yourself a human being, neither very strong in health nor lively in

spirits, sitting to study and write, when other urgent occasions will permit, at least eight or nine hours every day; interrupted by a variety of unexpected incidents; engaged in a publication which, besides other consequences, if it do not succeed, must involve him and his family in many and great difficulties—and it cannot succeed unless diligently prosecuted,—it will not fail if it be: imagine this person quitting a place where he lived many years; building a house and making gardens in a perfect desert; preparing to part with his flock, and remove his family and furniture; hurried by a thousand necessary engagements, and often unnecessary cares; distressed because unable to proceed with his regular work; having often forty letters by him unanswered, &c.: I will proceed no further; but I say, imagine this, and plead my cause for not writing to you, when cordial friendship and good will dictated, but no urgent necessity impelled: and, though you will doubtless bring me in guilty of a misdemeanor, yet I think you will not lay any heavy penalty upon me. . . .

“I would readily give my attestation to the character and principles of you and your friends, were I asked: but I do not think that is likely. . . . Your Sunday school teachers are the very men that the ruling party choose to plague. They are ‘jacobins,’ in their esteem. If indeed they teach for hire, these men can understand it: and, as they do not say the poor should not be taught, it is all very well. But, if they pretend to be disinterested, and teach for nothing, ‘That is all pretence: human nature is not capable of this! Reputation,

power, consequence, the interest of a sect, or revolutionary principles are at the bottom! Depend upon it they are jacobins, or will soon be such!’ Thus men’s hearts prompt their tongues; and they cannot believe any man feels a nobler principle of action than they are conscious of. I had rather in many companies in England advocate the cause of the patients in the Lock, nay the felons in Newgate, than that of your friends, whom I sincerely and cordially respect. But the tide has turned: I have lost myself, as men say, because I will not turn with it. But it is in vain to go against tide and wind. Such a revolution has taken place, that, if your zealous brethren can have exemption from persecution, I think they must thankfully give up all thoughts of other exemptions, on account of such exertions as man despises, but God will not leave unrewarded.

“As to myself I have got a little living, about my former income, not above seventy inhabitants in the parish besides my family. Yet my little church is crowded on the Lord’s day; I have more on the weekday than I sometimes had at the Lock; and I have no contention. I do not regret the change, but bless God for it: and I think my sphere of usefulness enlarged. With my horse, mule, and garden, I and mine have some recreation; and the poor regard us as their friends.—I was a warrior at the Lock; but I longed for peace. However I won every battle I fought. I chose my successor, in defiance of dukes and lords, and have left the charity in flourishing circumstances—the Hospital nearly 2300*l.* and the Asylum nearly 1000*l.* richer last Lady-day, when

I quitted, than the Lady-day before, when I was chosen sole chaplain.

“I shall send you soon two or three copies of the Bible to the end of Job, and some of a funeral sermon for a most excellent parish minister in this neighbourhood,¹ to be disposed of for the benefit of his destitute family. My wife, daughter, and son unite in Christian respects and love, with your sincere, though negligent, friend and servant,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

The “revolution” in sentiment of which the writer here speaks, was a kind of revulsion unfavourable to liberty both civil and religious, which he conceived to have taken place since the time when multitudes had been led away by a misjudging partiality for republicanism and French principles.²—The “exemption” desired was, I presume, from Sunday drilling.

“DEAR SIR,

“Aston Sandford,
August 20, 1804.

.“WE were all much interested and affected by your letter ; and, had I time and spirits, I could either congratulate you or condole with you, (these often go together,) on the events you relate. Yet, on the whole, congratulation seems far the most proper. Your seasonable return before the war commenced is a mercy that you and Mrs. — will not soon forget. In any case, and especially as you were situated, a residence in France for a

¹ Rev. J. Newell.

² See above, p. 153.

few years, to say nothing of the treatment you might have expected, would have been a serious calamity. But your account of the Lord's goodness to you in respect of your marriage, and the comforts of it, peculiarly calls for congratulation, or rather thankfulness. I trust you will have more and more cause to bless God on that account. An union of this kind, founded on religious principles, and cemented by a thousand reciprocal kindnesses year after year, grows more and more near, and is the source of the most rational satisfaction, and solace under trials, that this poor world can afford. Yet still

‘ They build too low, who build beneath the skies.’

—Nor do I think even the decease of your honoured father more a cause for condolence, than for congratulation. He lived creditably and comfortably. He honoured the gospel which he professed, living and dying; and is now joining the praises, and sharing the pleasures, of the church triumphant. And, as we and our's must soon leave this poor world, with its few pleasures and many pains; and as many pious persons have to mourn in respect of the souls of departed relatives, almost without hope; so the peculiar circumstances of your trial require congratulation, as well as the trial itself condolence.

“As to myself, I am far from well, though able to preach, and go on with my publications: and the nature of my complaint (which is supposed to be something of the gout flying about me, without coming to a crisis,) rather tends to depression of spirits; so that I have not that courage, vigour,

and alacrity, or strength of mind, which used to be considered as a part of my character, and of which I fear I have sometimes been proud. But no courage except that of faith, no strength or joy, but from the Holy Spirit, can be depended on.—However, I keep up my spirits tolerably; and sometimes rejoice that I have been enabled thus far to hold on my way, and prosecute my works, which I hope will be of some use when I am removed to another, I trust a better, state.

“My situation is very retired: but I have a considerable number of attentive hearers; and I trust am useful in that respect: at least, I am more comfortably situated than ever before. And, when I can leave home to visit any of my brethren, I am sure of good congregations to attend my occasional preaching.Should you be able to visit us, we shall be very glad to see you. Mrs. S. and my daughter unite in kind respects and every good wish to you and Mrs. —, whom I pray God to bless, and make a blessing to you and many.

“I remain, dear sir,

“Your sincere friend and servant,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Aston Sandford,
April 2, 1805,

.“I HAVE occupied more time and room on *seculars* than I intended; yet I hope they have a subserviency to *spirituals*. In respect of your *constant employment*, it is almost unavoidable in most situations: and in general it has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. It is a blessed thing

to enter into the spirit of the apostle's exhortations, *Not slothful in business ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord : Do all heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men.* I am persuaded that you may conduct your secular business in a spiritual frame of mind ; and that I may be very carnal, even when writing, preaching, and praying, all the week long. But it is good to be aware of our danger, and watchful over our hearts. We have not *attained* ; but must *press forward*, lest we be carried backward.—I rejoice at the accession to your domestic comforts : and the satisfaction I have in my family makes me do it more feelingly. Yet these comforts must be attended with trials... My only daughter has, for the greatest part of the winter, been confined by repeated attacks in the lungs, which threatened a consumption.... We must therefore commend them to our God by constant prayer, and endeavour to bring them up in his ways ; and then all will be well.—My second son leaves me to-morrow to receive ordination. He is to be curate at a village close to Olney, where (at Olney) I was once curate. Pray for him that he may be a faithful and useful minister ! I have good hope of it.—We all join in respects, and best wishes, and prayers for you, Mrs. —, and your family.

“ Your's sincerely,

“ THOS. SCOTT.”

“ Aston Sandford,
December 12, 1805.

..... “ So much for dull business : and, alas !
I have little time to add to it.—As a parent who

has lost children, and felt keenly at the time, I can sympathize with you and Mrs. ——— on the loss of your beloved child. But the Lord never errs, nor is ever unfaithful or unkind. I have no doubt of the salvation of infants, at least of those of believers, who die before they commit actual sin: and it is worth all our labour, pain, and sorrow, to be instruments of God in giving being to an heir of heavenly happiness. This is an affliction tempered with some sweetness: and the sweetness will remain, or increase, when the bitterness is past: and I think of my children that are gone before, at some times with almost as much pleasure as of those who are living. But the loss of a child, grown up, and living and dying in evil courses, is bitterness tempered with no sweetness, except submission to the sovereignty of the only wise God. . . .

“We unite in Christian respects and prayers for you and your’s.

“I am, dear sir,

“Your’s affectionately,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

“DEAR SIR,

“Aston Sandford,
January 7, 1807.

. . . . “YOUR account of the religious concerns of your congregation is very affecting: but, alas! it is not at all unlike what is very common in this country. I was, however, in hopes that superficial endowments had not borne so high a price in the northern, as in the southern part of our island. I think that none of our religious bodies are quite scriptural in their rules and orders. Each has per-

haps some advantages, and each some disadvantages. . . . A principle of disunion seems, however, interwoven with the independent plan, when carried to its full extent: and, as a variety of things may influence a majority, even of a religious society, to make a wrong choice; and are especially likely to have this effect when vital religion is not very flourishing; there seems also a principle of *declension* interwoven, and none of *recovery* or revival. For, as religion declines, a superficial teacher will be more acceptable, and perhaps an erroneous one: and, when he is removed, it is not likely that the majority will prefer a holy heart-searching preacher. So that revivals must arise generally in some other way.

“But how is it in the church of England? Here I could say much: for certainly the manner in which ministers are appointed is not what could be wished. And I am of opinion that, till men of every party will seek out what is unscriptural among themselves, and acknowledge it, and use their influence (if they have any,) to alter it; and also will consider what is scriptural among others, and allow it, and propose it to imitation—instead of vindicating, right or wrong, all their own usages, and condemning all the usages of other companies; not one step can be taken towards healing our divisions, or *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace*.

“Here in England the old strict dissenting societies generally decline for a time, and often become Arian, &c.: but the removal of evangelical clergymen, when such as are of opposite sentiments succeed them; and the random and super-

ficial, yet zealous and active, exertions of irregular or more lax dissenters, continually supply a great number of recruits. Sometimes they join old societies, become a majority, and give a turn to their concerns; and frequently they establish new meetings, rather congregational, but often almost non-descript. This is not a healthful state: but it is far better than death.—But enough of this. . . .

“ Begging an interest in your prayers,

“ I remain, dear sir,

“ Your faithful friend and servant,

“ THOS. SCOTT.”

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Aston Sandford,
July 26, 1809.

“ I OUGHT to have acknowledged your's sooner: but I live in a perpetual hurry of engagements. I am employed daily from morning till night: and then my conscience reproaches me for having neglected something that should especially have been done. I dream continually (though awake,) of some approaching time, when I shall overtake my work, have more leisure, and be more punctual: but the expected time arrives, and I am as hurried as ever.—Well: it is as well to do too much as too little; to *rub* out as to *rust* out, as the puritans used to say: and I have the satisfaction of knowing that all my employments are of a useful *tendency*, and many of them actually useful. I hope that you will bear with my tardiness; and I rejoice that there *remaineth a rest—the keeping of a sabbath—an eternal sabbath—for the people of God.*—I have great reason to be thankful that

my health is restored to about its former state; and I seem as capable of labour as heretofore. I last Lord's day performed the whole service three times; preached about an hour each time, one with another; performed some extra parochial duties; and rode about eleven miles, without any peculiar inconvenience. Yet many things (such as Barzillai speaks of, 2 Sam. xix. 36,) remind me that I am old, and that I have not very long to continue here. Pray for me that my last days may be the most useful and most comfortable....

"I did not not think of writing more than a few lines, when I began: but I seem conversing with an old correspondent, and write on without duly considering how little time I have to spare.—I hope and pray that you and your's may be the blessed of the Lord, and, though we are not likely to meet on earth, that we shall meet in a better world.

"I remain, dear sir,

"Your faithful friend and servant,

"THOMAS SCOTT."

"DEAR SIR,

"Aston Sandford,
December 14, 1811.

.... "I HAVE now sold the copy-right of the Bible, and nearly all the complete sets. I am to have 2000*l.* for the copy-right: but even that, when paid, will not clear all my debts. But I have a considerable quantity of printed paper, which will gradually bring in something: and at last, if we can say with good old Jacob when near death, *God that fed me all my life long, the Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads!* bless

our children and children's children; and then add, as he does, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord*; no matter whether we grow rich, or be impoverished: *all things are our's*; and we shall leave the blessing of God to our children—and how many tens of thousands of pounds is that worth?

“You inquire after me. I am of an infirm and uncomfortable state of health; and indeed, I never knew firm health long together in my life. Yet, bless God, at almost sixty-five, I am able to go through as much work, either in my study or the pulpit, as ever I did, except in moving from place to place. . . . I almost wish — could have you for a patient under your nervous debility. Air and exercise, however, are the most universally successful remedies. Desks, and counting houses, and studies, and endless application, and anxious care, on the one hand, and indolence on the other, are the great sources of these maladies. Except in the depth of winter, I work, as a labourer, two or three hours every day in my garden, to counterbalance the application of my study. Let nothing hinder you from using exercise to the very border of wearying yourself, and in the open air. This is my prescription: and no good physician will refuse to set his name to it. . . .

“I am, dear sir,

“Your's faithfully and affectionately,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

X.

LETTERS TO THE REV. DOCTOR RYLAND.

1809—1819.

“Aston Sandford,
June 24, 1809.

“I SENT off two missionaries this week, who are going to Sierra Leone; both excellent men, and one of them of considerable talents. He has married a wife of my congregation. Our parting, both in preaching and praying, in public and in the family, has been almost beyond any scene I ever witnessed. I cannot but hope that a blessing, in answer to the prayers of numbers, will attend them.—I have two more with me, most decided characters, who are studying Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Susoo, (do you not stare at my talking in this manner?) with the express purpose of being qualified to translate the scriptures, or part of them, into the African languages. I have devoted much of my time to this object; excited to emulation by the example of your missionaries in India. . . . You will remember our conversations on the subject of missions at Northampton: and now, I think, the close of my life is likely to be especially devoted to promote that object, respecting which we then conversed and prayed.”

We have before seen his practical sympathy with one missionary institution, conducted by Christians of different denominations from his own, under its losses ; the next letter will show him acting a similar part towards another. It relates to the destruction, by fire, of the Baptist Mission printing establishment in the East Indies.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Aston Sandford,
Oct. 5, 1812.

“ I WRITE this in great haste, just to inform you, that, immediately on receiving the affecting news of the calamity which has befallen your printing establishment at Serampore, I determined to address my little company on the subject ; and to raise a small sum as a testimony of brotherly sympathy, and cordiality to the cause in which your honourable corps in the east are engaged. I perhaps flattered myself that my opening the way might induce others, even in the establishment, to do the same on a larger scale. The subject, as involving so much concerning translations, languages, printing, &c. was not quite favourable to my efforts ; yet I obtained considerable attention. The result however was not quite adequate to my expectation. I thought we should reach 20*l.* ; but we got only 15*l.* 6*s.* 7*d.*¹ This I shall take care to pay into the hands of those appointed to receive such contributions, when I know who they are : but I thought that probably the information might be of some little use, and give some encouragement to expect assistance from every quarter ;

¹ See Life, p. 385, 386. (396, 397.)

for it is the common cause of Christianity, and also of oriental literature—which some will properly appreciate, who, I fear, care little for Christianity. . . . Some delay to the attempts to give the inhabitants of the east the scriptures, each in his own language, will be occasioned; but depend upon it, as your correspondent Marshman expresses it, the devil will repent of having done it, as far as it was his doing: for I cannot doubt that, by exciting exertions among persons of different sentiments on our minute disputed points, it will tend to increase brotherly love, and make way for all *striving together for the faith of the gospel* with more combined efforts. . . . Believe me, my dear sir,

“Your sincere friend and brother,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Aston Sandford,
April 28, 1813.

“I WAS from home attending the annual meeting of the Uxbridge Auxiliary Bible Society, by particular request, when your letter arrived. . . . What I saw and heard there was truly animating, and led me to think that very great good indeed will *in England* arise from this admirable institution. Two admirals spoke in a manner so genuinely Christian, that I could not but admire it. Lord Gambier was in the chair, and he closed the meeting with these words, *O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* The other admiral was next under him in command at the bombardment of Copenhagen. He in a style of

animated exhortation stirred up the large assembly, not only to contribute liberally, as a pleasure and a privilege, to circulate the Bible; but to study it themselves carefully, and to read it in their families, as the best bond of domestic harmony. I thought at first he had been a preacher; and I said to myself, If a preacher he is an uncommonly good one.—The whole was peculiarly animating and edifying.”

“ Aston Sandford,
Dec. 3, 1814.

“ I do most heartily rejoice in what your missionaries are doing in India. Their's is the most regular and best conducted plan against the kingdom of darkness, that modern times have shown; and I augur the most extensive success. More genuine Christian wisdom, fortitude, and disinterested assiduity, perseverance, and patience appear, than I elsewhere read of. May God protect and prosper! May all India be peopled with true Christians!—even though they be all baptists. If you read the Registers of our society, you will find that our prospects are opening both in India and Africa. I trust a similar plan of translating and dispersing will soon be adopted in Africa, by some who were under my care. The Lord is doing great things, and answering prayer every where.”

“ Aston Sandford,
Jan. 9, 1815.

“ I HAVE lately, and indeed for several years, bestowed a great deal of pains in reading various books in the Greek language; and am certainly

far more competent to speak on the subject of diminutives ; &c.” (such as βαπτίζω,) “ than I was : and in revising my note on Matthew iii. I will, should I be spared, take your criticisms also into consideration, and alter or soften whatever I may judge needs it. Further than this I cannot say.”

This I insert as a proof of the consideration, with which what appears upon the subject in the Commentary must be understood to have been written.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Aston Sandford,
Oct. 23, 1815.

“ I AM, like you, little at leisure for writing letters : yet I also often think of you, and of your situation, both in respect of your most important society, and of the interest of vital, holy, evangelical religion in your connexion. I hope you have many coadjutors ; but, except Satan be dead or asleep, you must expect many opponents ; for every thing which either feeds the pride, or fosters the sloth or worldliness of human nature, will always, till the grand and universal pouring out of the Holy Spirit, be better received among men, even men professing Christianity and many particular truths of Christianity, than the humbling holy *truth as it is in Jesus*. But be of good cheer : *Magna est veritas et prævalebit* : or rather, as my poor folks at Ravenstone used to say, ‘ Well, after all, God is above the devil.’ Go on and prosper, and *strive earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints*, and for the grand essentials of the gospel : and, while less will be done than you perhaps

once expected, more will eventually be done than at other times you supposed.

“The tendency of the religion in London and its vicinity, among the evangelical body, is strongly towards antinomianism. . . . I do however think that in other parts, in our connexion, antinomian Calvinism is not the general danger ; but rather such a shyness about Calvinism as greatly darkens the glory of the gospel. Yet still, most certainly, vital Christianity is far more deeply, and practically, and widely inculcated by the clergy than it was thirty years ago. . . . My thirty, and more than thirty years have been spent in opposing antinomianism and self-righteous religion. The most permanent and extensive means has been and will be the Exposition : but I must soon take off my armour.”

I would here observe that in a letter of a later date, October 19, 1818, he, on the one hand, expresses a less favourable opinion of the views of many of the “*Calvinistic* evangelical clergy,” and, on the other hand, considers “scriptural principles as *awfully exploded under the obnoxious name of Calvinism.*”

“Aston Sandford,
Aug. 12, 1819.

“In respect of the new set of antinomians,¹ I have no doubt, from the self-conceited spirit that prevails among many of them, that the event will be in many a total dereliction of evangelical and

¹ Those who have been called *Seceders*, from the established church, in England.

even of orthodox principles ; but in a variety of ways and forms of heresy. I should think the book you mention is a mere refinement of Arianism : if not somewhat nearer ‘ the frigid zone.’ But, alas ! if one could smile, instead of weeping, one might smile at recollecting the words of the wicked author of Hudibras,

‘ As if religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended.’

.....I never miss a day praying for your missionary society, as well as others ; and very often with an *especially*....I hope that God has graciously removed the sickness of your family : but it is a sick, and suffering, and dying world. May the Lord give us faith and patience and hope, that we may be ready when the summons comes ; and in the mean time may do what we can, that others may have what we have learned and taught, worthy remembering, *in remembrance after our decease !* ”

XI.

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS.

1796—1821.

To the Rev. Robert Storry, Colchester.

ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF TIME.

“DEAR SIR,

“Chapel Street,
November 29, 1796.

.....“I SHOULD be glad to make my letter worth postage by inserting in it any observations that were made on the way of dividing and spending time: but I fear I cannot *ex promptu* do much justice to the subject. It was generally agreed that no man can lay down rules which suit another; so much depends on health, circumstances, disposition, and engagements: that a man should not so lay down rules for himself as to bind himself to them at all events; otherwise he may decline services to which he is called, because contrary to his rule; set up his own will as to the disposal of time in opposition to that of God; lose his temper when broken in upon; and be tempted to harshness and unkindness to the distressed, whose case will not admit of delays. Our Lord suffered even his retired hours to be intruded on, and did not bid the people come at a more season

able hour.—In order to divide time aright it must be *redeemed*: we must know its worth and importance, and determine not to part with it but for a valuable consideration. A man should *have* his plan, though he should not either attempt to impose it on others, or bind himself too stiffly to it. Many arrangements in the family, and in every branch of it, are necessary to procure the largest *quantum* of time to be divided; and a man must know how to rule his own household, as well as to curb his own affections, who would not let time run to waste. Such visits as are not likely to produce benefit to ourselves or to others, or at least to obviate prejudice and prevent harm, should be shunned: and yet it is sometimes well to lose a little time, as we would a little money, rather than give offence, and preclude ourselves from usefulness. The best hours of the day, and those least liable to interruption, should be chosen for devotion, meditation, and closer studies. One part of our duty should be made a recreation from the weariness of another: especially conversation and social intercourse, or such books as require comparatively little attention. *Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost.* Have some book at hand, or some employment ready, for the odds and ends, the parentheses of time, which are generally wasted. As little time allotted to sleep and animal recreation, as serves to keep the body in health, is of great use: but, where a man carries this further than his constitution will admit, because others have found that they could do what he attempts, he will in the event find it unfavourable to his grand object. In all cases the care of health

and spirits, by air and exercise, &c, in moderation, is a valuable use of time, and should be considered in the division of it.—Upon the whole, some men ought to spend much time in their study; others will do more good in going among the poor, or in visiting such as are willing to welcome instructions. Some ministers should allot much time to the study of their sermons; others will speak most intelligibly when less elaborate, and may redeem their time for other purposes: but all ought to have stated times for searching the scriptures and prayer; and to seize occasional opportunities for ejaculatory worship, in addition; but not to depend on this latter practice, or be satisfied with it.—The man who loves money finds out how to get and spare it; and he who wants to make it go far finds out how to divide it. We are the Lord's servants; and if we be employed as he would have us our time is rightly divided, though other rules be neglected.—I have only room to add that I remain your's very affectionately,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

To a Lady.

ON SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD.

“DEAR MADAM,

“Chapel Street,
Jan. 21, 1799.

—— “You should first of all remember, that the measures I recommend are not good or obligatory *because* I recommend them, but either from their previous nature, or not at all. I can only declare to you the precepts of scripture, and explain them, or give you the counsel which appears

to me most suited to your case, and most conducive to your permanent peace and comfort:—for I trust you will give me full credit, that I have no other end in view, but to do my own duty, and to promote your best interest. Now, this being so, I cannot alter the nature of things: I have no authority to dispense with God's commandments nor can I counsel any one contrary to my judgment. But, on the other hand, I have no authority to command or forbid, to give you leave or the contrary: and, when I have given you the best advice I am able, I leave the matter to the Lord: and frequently they who have excused themselves, on one pretence or another, from following it at the time, have afterwards learned by experience, that it would have been better for them if they had done otherwise: and in general this is the only school in which we learn true wisdom....

“I never said or thought that *dancing*, as an exercise, or recreation, with intimate acquaintance and near relations, for a short time, was sinful. But mixed dancing, in large companies, of young men and women, who in general have no fear of God before their eyes, is, both in low life and high life, very contrary to spirituality and christian purity, and in general not favourable even to morality. Did I think you really could *relish* such scenes of frivolity, and often of profaneness, I should be sorry and silent: but I have myself pleaded before now for things which I no longer loved, because I was afraid of reproach in decidedly separating from them. As even the words of Christ are brought to sanction such things, let me

intreat you to ask yourself very seriously, whether you really think he or his apostles would have frequented such scenes, or counselled others to do it.—As every kind of dancing is not a dissipated assembly, so every *feast* is not a riotous debauch: and therefore the texts of scripture adduced are not all to the purpose. There are feasts, and there at least *have been* dancings, which a man might join in, and not be *conformed to the world*, but *redeem his time, and do all to the glory of God*: but are those which you half plead for of this sort?

“*The fear of man bringeth a snare*: and, if you cannot bear the reproach of those, who at the same time perhaps are self condemned, and whom you cannot but perceive to be acting very contrary to Christianity, how would you bear to face the persecutor who had *power to kill the body*? and, if you should go on, (which I hope you will not,) to be *ashamed of Christ* among those who despise him, how can you get over the awful warning, which the loving Saviour himself hath given expressly on this subject? (Mark viii. 38.)

“But, if you do not yield to persuasion to go to such diversions, you wish to be excused assigning your reasons.—If you can get off assigning any reason, perhaps that might be allowed: but can you reconcile giving a reason, which, though true in itself, is not your real motive, with *simplicity and godly sincerity*?

“In fact, you are in a circle from which, if you will be the real disciple of Christ, you must *come out and be separate*, except as relative duties, &c. are concerned. The only question is, whether

this separation shall be effected by a decided answer or two, which will expose you, for a very little time, to a good deal of ridicule and reproach, but will induce all improper acquaintance to give you up without further trouble ; or whether it should be done gradually, by a half-concealment of your sentiments, continually leading you into temptation, and exceedingly prolonging both your inward disquietude, and the term of running the gauntlet among your acquaintance. For my part, if I must have a limb cut off, I am for an operation as speedy as is consistent with safety : and prefer a sharp short pain to a more lingering, though less acute one.

“Your idea, that you shall not be able to act suitably hereafter, if you now give up your worldly acquaintance, is a mere temptation. If the Lord help you to yield simple obedience in this trying case, he will help you in all that follow : and you are called to trust him so to do. But you can do neither, except by his special grace, sought in earnest frequent prayer.

“The duty we owe to God is to be learned from his word, and not from the conduct or opinion of men. Mistakes and faults are in the best : and there are many half characters whom we know not what to think of.

“I suppose no one ever yet was brought to follow Christ, without exposing his character to a measure of that contempt and reproach of which you are so dreadfully afraid. For my part, I have had a very large share of it, with indignant enmity added to it : yet I look back, half smiling and half ashamed, to think how alarmed I was at a

mere phantom, which could not possibly do me any harm. In *taking up my cross*, this, which I dreaded the most, has actually pained me the least. When I decidedly avowed my religious sentiments, I was soon forsaken by all my old acquaintance; whom, though I then thought them to be very kind friends, I have since known to be very ensnaring companions; and I was immediately received into the society of the most amiable, the most kind and affectionate friends, that this poor world affords. If a general acquaintance, who may raise a laugh at your expence, and perhaps heave a secret sigh afterwards, be so hardly relinquished; what is the trial of those who must act as if they *hated* father or mother, or wife or husband, or else be counted unworthy of being numbered with the friends of Christ, or owned by him as such in the decisive day? We ought, in certain degrees and ways, to love all our fellow creatures, according to their several relations to us: and we cannot but love ease and pleasure better than pain: but what is *self-denial*, *bearing the cross*, being *crucified to the world*, or *not loving it*, if we are not, on many occasions, to prefer pain to pleasure, and to offend our dearest friends and relatives, rather than offend or dishonour our Saviour and our Judge? ¹

“ You seem to think of the world as if it would be a desolate wilderness to you, should you re-

¹ It may deserve to be impressed upon all our minds, that all the self-denial which either reason or scripture requires of us, amounts to nothing more than *preferring long pleasures to short ones*.

nounce your present circle. I am no friend to *seclusion*, though I am to seasons of *retirement*. I am sociable, and love society. But you may choose: both the society of worldly people and of real devoted Christians you cannot have: but you may command that which you prefer. As soon as you are known decidedly to separate from the former, you will be cordially welcomed by the latter; but not before. Whatever you may think of my assertions, I trust you will credit our Redeemer's express words, in which he promises to every one, without exception, who, for his sake and the gospel's, renounces earthly friends and comforts, *a hundred-fold more in this present world, as well as in the world to come eternal life*. Confidently believe him: act upon it: and you will doubtless experience the blessed fulfilment; as I and thousands beside have done before you.

“I am afraid you sacrifice too much to what you deem *politeness*: and I am almost ready to think, that on some occasions you would be ready to infringe a divine precept, rather than the etiquette of your circle.—Though, alas! too rude myself, I am no advocate for *rudeness*: but surely when the will of God, the honour of the gospel, and the salvation, or even the comfort, of your own soul is concerned, you ought to learn to give a firm refusal to an improper invitation; and not lay yourself at the mercy of every one, who chooses to solicit your acquaintance.

“In short, I hope (though you may yourself object to the word,) that you are so far impressed with divine things, that, however you may prolong your own anxiety, you will have no peace but in

decidedly *counting all but loss for Christ*: and, if you could be persuaded to make the trial in simplicity, I have no doubt that *peace and joy in believing* would soon possess your heart: and I am fully assured, that nothing keeps you from happiness, but the dread of selling all to appropriate the *pearl of great price*. . . . Most heartily begging the Lord to bless my poor endeavours to your present comfort and your everlasting good,

“I remain,

“Your’s most sincerely,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

To the Rev. Basil Woodd.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Aston Sandford,
January 15, 1806.

. . . . “In respect to your first question, I find little difficulty in answering, though not with the accuracy of a definition. I see nothing in your pamphlet¹ which does not accord with my views; though, in speaking on repentance and faith, I seldom call them *conditions* or *terms*; because some object, and others misunderstand me, if I do: and as the *words* are not found in the scripture, I make a shift to convey my meaning without them. But I have no doubt of these things being in a sober sense *conditions*, that is, *sine qua nons*. In like manner I do not find the terms, covenant of redemption, or covenant of grace, in scripture; and therefore I generally express myself in other words; though I do not at all object to the use of

¹ On the Two Covenants.

them by others, in the very sense which you mention. Should I try to be systematical, I should perhaps call the former 'the covenant of mediation;' the conditions of which Christ fulfilled, in order that he might be *the Mediator of the new covenant*. This covenant (the covenant of grace, *the everlasting covenant*) is made with us individually, when we accede to it, and not before. (2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Isa. lv. 3.) Christ is *the one Mediator between God and man; the Father hath committed all things into his hands*: and when we entrust our souls to him the covenant is made *with us*. Whatever in this respect, introduces *election*, relates to the secret purposes of God, or to the secret transactions of the Father with the constituted Mediator. No doubt living faith is the gift of God, and the effect of regeneration,—and of the gracious purposes of God towards us: but the covenant is not ratified with us till we by faith actually accede to it. By *writing the law in our hearts*, from which true repentance, faith, &c. spring, God *makes his new covenant with us*, becomes *our God*, and takes us for *his people*. This is my view of the question. (See Essay on the Mediation of Christ.) I should say it is absolute in the promise *to Christ* in behalf of the elect: for no promise is made to any as being elect, but as coming to Christ by faith."

To Thomas Cox, Esq., Derby.

1814.

“DEAR SIR,

“I AM greatly obliged by your kind order of books; and I ought to be so for your favourable and too high opinion of me, expressed in emphatical language; but I rather fear that such effusions, from the heart, I doubt not, of you and other friends, render *thorns in the flesh, and messengers of Satan to buffet me*, requisite to keep me from being exalted above measure. I often think that, if my friends really knew me, and all that which passes in my experience from week to week, they would wholly change their sentiments concerning me. The longer I live the more I find *that in me, that is in my flesh*, or apart from special grace, *dwelleth no good thing*: and, were it not for a firm reliance on the mercy, the abounding mercy, of God in Christ Jesus, I could have no hope or comfort.—I trust however that I do honestly aim and desire to serve the Lord: and my confidence is this, *I have hoped in thy mercy, and my soul shall rejoice in thy salvation*.

“I do not know how deep the sense of sin, and sorrow for it, ought to be in order to acceptance with God: but I always consider it in this view: There is a provision, and a proposal made to us, or to those who feel and acknowledge their need of it, and submitting to God’s righteousness, and renouncing all self-dependence, seek the mercy and grace of the gospel as their only refuge and remedy. Some perceive their guilt and danger, before they perceive distinctly the remedy: and

these pass through much distress and terror. Others are led to see the remedy as fast as they discover their need of it; and they are gradually humbled without being much distressed or terrified. (Notes and Practical Observations on Luke xix. 1—10.) In respect of the *degree* of humiliation, and *depth* of the discovery of the evil of sin, and of our own sinfulness, which would be sufficient, and adequate to the cause there is for them; I believe no man ever did yet experience them so deeply as he ought: and that, the deeper views we have of the evil of sin, and of our own sinfulness, and the more self-abasement, yea self-abhorrence, we actually feel in the sight of God; the more just our estimate is, and the more proper the state of our hearts. This many are convinced of as a sentiment, and, without intending any hypocrisy, they adopt the scriptural language of the most eminent saints, as what they *ought* to feel, rather than what they *do* feel: and this sometimes tends to perplex their brethren, who are conscious that they cannot honestly adopt the same language. We ought indeed constantly to pray that we may be more and more deeply convinced of sin, and humbled before God; and constantly to watch our own hearts, comparing them with the holy commands of God, and with the example of Christ: and this will lead to deeper and more solid views of our real character, and of the sinfulness of our nature: but we should also pray that our views of *the unsearchable riches of Christ* may be proportionable; that dejection (which by no means adorns the gospel,) may not be connected with our humiliation. If this process, so to speak, go

on scripturally, we shall constantly grow more and more simply dependent on Christ, and ready to answer every temptation to depart from him, with the words of Peter, *Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life ;* and with earnest prayers to be *kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.*

“When you say, My mind is constantly roving after sinful objects, &c., I suppose you mean wandering and evil thoughts, which harass and distress you, but which you hate, and strive against, though not always successfully. This is the lamentation, I believe, of all who distinguish the prayer and praise of the heart from that of the lips : and I apprehend that Satan has often much to do in this, to discourage us from prayer. You will find my thoughts on this subject in the notes on Psalms lxvi. 18, 19 ; cxix. 113 ; Matt. iv. 1—12 : Heb. ii. 16—18.

“In compliance with your request, I have written a few lines, but am far from attaching that importance to them which you speak of—I remember an aged Christian said to me, I have served Christ —— years, and I never had any thing to find fault with but the servant. He is a good master, as you will know more and more : and I pray God all your relatives may share your blessedness, for it is a great blessedness to be a Christian indeed.”

To the Rev. G. Knight, Harwell, Berks.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Aston Sandford,
March 30, 1814.

“I RECEIVED from Mr. Maddock a scrap of a letter from you to him, kindly inquiring after me, &c.

“As to the inquiries, I must only say, that I have been ill in the winter, but am now not materially worse. I go through with a great many employments; yet always with lassitude and uneasy feelings; and am little capable of locomotion in any way.

“I have however abundant reason for gratitude for many and great mercies, of the least of which I feel myself wholly undeserving. You have probably heard that I was very much pressed with difficulties in my temporal concerns; and with debts, which for many years I struggled hard, with hope and constant disappointments, to clear off. These arose from various causes: the chief was, that in fact I tried to sell the Family Bible cheaper than it could be afforded: and thus the rise in price of paper and printing, &c., &c., ate up my expected profit, and caused debts to increase; as I had too little of another kind to live upon. But this having become known by some intimations to one or two persons, so many in every part have, unsolicited by me, come forward to my help, that I am completely set at liberty; and have enough remaining for my use as long as I shall need it, and more. You will help me to bless God for his

mercies, and to pray to him for a blessing on my benefactors.¹

“ Mrs. S. desires to unite in kind remembrances to you and Mrs. K., praying our God to bless you and your’s, and to make you a blessing.

“ I remain,

“ Your affectionate friend and brother,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

To a young Baptist Minister,

who in transmitting the letter makes the following observations :

“ I had been a resident in his house during a very dangerous and peculiar affliction, from November, 1812, to the latter end of March, 1813. Almost all that time I was confined to my bed, and my death was almost daily expected for many weeks. If the family think fit to make any use of this letter, which I most highly prize, I shall be very happy in communicating it : if not, it may be some gratification to them to see this additional proof of the almost unequalled excellency of the writer.”

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Aston Sandford,
September 26, 1814.

“ I OUGHT perhaps before this to have answered your letter : but my engagements and infirmities combine to render me a tardy correspondent ; except where dire necessity impels me.

¹ See Life, p. 421—429. (432—441.)

“If I or mine have been the instruments, in the hands of God, of restoring your health, and enabling you to return to your labours in the ministry; and if by that ministry any of our fellow sinners be *turned from darkness to light in the Lord*; we have a rich reward. But, besides this, our gracious God has, in many instances, and lately especially,¹ so interposed for us in his providence, that I must be convinced he will not let me, or any of his servants, be losers, as to temporal things, by any work or labour of love of this kind. I shall always value your prayers: and in my present declining state I much need them, that I may be *strengthened with all might in the inner man, to all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness*, thankfulness, and hope; and may run the last stage of my earthly course in a manner which may not discredit my former profession;—for I feel myself very weak and cowardly.

If I should forget to pray for you by name, as it were, there is one petition in which you *must* be included, and which I most days offer—for all who ever have been under my roof, and have joined in our family-worship; for every blessing, which their services, trials, and temptations, render needful.

“What you say on the supposition (I hope well grounded,) that our conduct respecting you was influenced by the grace of God given us, reminds me of a word which I once heard from Rowland Hill. Speaking of the loveliness of some characters influenced by Christian principles, he burst

¹ See preceding letter.

forth thus : ‘ If a drop from the fulness of Christ be so lovely, what must that fulness itself be ! ’ and he went on for some moments, in the highest strain, I had almost said, of divine eloquence.—
O si sic semper !

.... “ May the Lord prosper you in your own soul, and to the souls of many !

“ I remain,

“ Your faithful friend and servant ,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

To the Editor.

ON MARRYING A DECEASED WIFE’S SISTER.

“ DEAR JOHN,

“ Aston Sandford,
January 9, 1815.

“ I AM not willing that your letter should remain unanswered ; though I am not in frame for labour and thought to-day, having been much worn down yesterday, and greatly harassed by my cough. Not that I have any thing to say on the subject of it, which has not occurred to you : but, lest expecting something from me should occasion any demur as to the counsel to be given, and the measures to be adopted, in the interesting and affecting case which you state. I cannot but feel much for Mr. ——— and all concerned ; but it appears to me that the first severe conflict or trial is the safest, and promises best for future repose and comfort.

“ When I wrote the first edition of the Commentary, I had no idea of the work occupying the place which it now does : and I thought questions

of this kind, as requiring studied and rather laboured disquisition, rather foreign to my design : and I have since been so cramped by want of *time* or *room*, that I have not attempted any thing of the sort material in addition ; though I see and lament the deficiency in this and several other particulars of a similar nature. I have, however, always considered the marrying of a wife's sister as contrary to the laws given by Moses, as well as to our laws : and in more instances than one have prevented it ; once not less than thirty-three or thirty-four years since, before I ever thought of writing on the Bible.

“I was aware that our spiritual courts took cognizance of such marriages, and that sometimes very harassing effects followed from them ; but I was not aware that the penalties of the law were so very severe. Probably this, with the odium which may attach to informants, who make a gain of such matters, may have disposed the public mind, or those concerned, to pass them over unnoticed. But the law is like a loaded blunderbuss, the lock of which is grown rusty : it may not easily be fired ; but, if it should, it may do dreadful execution : and I think nothing short of peremptory duty should induce a man to expose himself, and all dear to him, to such consequences, or to the continually alarming idea that he lives exposed to them.

“But I am also decidedly of opinion, that it is our duty to be obedient to every law of the government under which we live, which we can obey without disobeying God, whatever self-denial it may require of us ; and that in refusing obedience

we sin against God. *Ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake* : and deliberately to venture on an action, which cannot be recalled, exposing a man to the accusation of his conscience in future, is far from tending to the comfort of a person rather prone to dejection ; however it may seem at the present.

“ I must also think that our law in this respect coincides with the divine law to Israel. If, notwithstanding the exception of marrying the widow of a deceased brother, who died childless, the prohibition of marrying a brother's widow be absolute, (Lev. xviii. 16.) I see not on what ground it can be otherwise than absolute, that a woman should not marry the husband of her deceased sister. The case seems perfectly parallel : the reasons entirely the same. In the case of a man not being allowed to marry his aunt ; whence our laws conclude, that a woman ought not to marry her uncle ; some difference may be marked : a reversal in the superiority of relation takes place in the one instance, and not in the other. But even this cannot be urged in the case in point.

“ That these laws cannot be in all possible cases of moral obligation, must be admitted. It might be *possible* for a man and woman to be placed in the same situation as Adam and Eve, as to such matters. Yet still in all ordinary cases some laws of this kind are needful and highly beneficial : and, I apprehend, in all countries professing Christianity more strict rules have been adopted, not only by legislators, but by missionaries and casuists, than were adopted by the heathen : yet St. Paul's language concerning him who had his father's wife

implies, that the regulations of the more enlightened gentiles on this subject were right. The only fault in nominal Christians has been, extending the restrictions beyond those in the divine law.—But, if we reject the laws in Leviticus, we have *no law of God* on the subject; no, not against marrying sisters or brothers, or any relation. Now can we think that God intended to set aside these laws in Leviticus, and to give no other in their stead? Can we suppose that he meant to leave the Christian church *without law*, in this most important matter? But, if not *without law*, the laws in Leviticus, in all general cases, are in full force: and therefore, as a casuist, I must consider the intended marriage as *contrary to the law of God*. The regulations and permissions of the *judicial*¹ law about divorces and polygamy, being unsuitable to the more enlarged dispensation of the gospel, are particularly regulated by our Lord and his apostles: when therefore, as is the present case, no regulation is made, no intimation of change given, it must be supposed that the law continues in force.—Whatever these laws are, they are not *rituals, ceremonies, shadows of good things to come*: so they do not pass away of course, as the ceremonial law did.

“ If one thinks of the present moment, the *heart* would be disposed to dictate a different decision than the *head* does: but, taking in all consequences, the heart comes over to the decision of the head.—*Thou shalt not in any wise suffer sin on*

¹ That is, *the law of the land* among the Jews, as contradistinguished to the *moral* law of universal obligation.

thy neighbour ; but shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Lev. xix. 17, 18.) And I am persuaded that, if Mr.—— is induced, from regard to the divine law, to cut off as it were the hand which would cause him to offend, he will ere long find that the Lord will, in one way or other, so support and comfort him, that he shall rejoice in the painful decision.

“Last year at this time I was very ill, I am now only poorly. The rest as usual. May the Lord bless you all, and grant you a happy year: so I trust we all pray,

“Your most affectionate Father,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

It is not to be concealed, that I have felt considerable hesitation in giving this letter to the public, because of the pain it must occasion to such readers as may feel themselves concerned in its contents. If, however, the practice against which it is directed be wrong, and erroneous views respecting it be also very common, tenderness for those who have fallen into it must not prevent our cautioning others. And accordingly I feel myself sanctioned in printing the letter, by the writer's having fully approved of my sending, at the time, a paper, containing the same sentiments, to a respectable periodical publication.

That the practice is wrong, and utterly unwarrantable for *us*, at least, on the grounds stated in the third and fourth paragraphs of the letter, none surely can deny, even though they should be unwilling to admit the general conclusion against it

from scripture—which, however, it does not seem easy to set aside.

The principle of our laws appears to be this: That in the Levitical laws ‘all the degrees by name are not expressly set down: for the Holy Ghost there did only declare plainly and clearly such degrees, from whence the rest might evidently be deduced. As for example, where it is prohibited that the son shall not marry his mother, it followeth also, that the daughter shall not marry her father.’ And by this parity of reason the case before us is determined. Leviticus xviii. 16, and xx. 21, forbid a man to marry his brother’s wife (i. e. widow): therefore, it is inferred, a woman is not to marry her (late) sister’s husband: for a woman stands precisely in the same relation to her sister’s husband, that a man does to his brother’s wife. The words of Bishop Jewel, in his printed letter upon this point, are as follows: ‘Albeit I be not forbidden by plain words to marry my wife’s sister, yet I am forbidden to do so by other words, which by exposition are plain enough. For, when God commands me that I shall not marry my brother’s wife, it follows directly by the same, that he forbids me to marry my wife’s sister. For between one man and two sisters, and one woman and two brothers, is like analogy or proportion.’¹

¹ The case of a man’s marrying his brother’s wife, i. e. widow, was the famous one of Henry VIII. The opinion of Luther, Melancthon, and their friends, among others, was sought upon it. They thought such a marriage ought not to be contracted, but that, when contracted, it ought not to be dissolved.—Seckendorf Hist. Luth. III. p. 112.

It is well known, indeed, that there was a case (alluded to in this letter, and the same on which the Sadducees pretended to found an argument against the resurrection of the dead,¹) in which a man was even required by the judicial law of the Jews to marry his brother's widow. But the reason assigned, and all the circumstances of the case, have induced commentators pretty generally, I believe, to conclude, that this was an exception from the general rule, made for the Jews only, and designed to keep their genealogies unbroken, and their inheritances in the same line.—Leviticus xviii. 18, has also been adduced in the argument: but it is very obscure, and the reader may be referred to my father's commentary upon it.

With regard to the 'penalty' of the law,—such marriages are pronounced incestuous, and are liable at any time during the life of the parties to be declared void, and the issue of them illegitimate: and, if I am not mis-informed, the instances are neither few nor remote in which this has taken place.—It seems also that any clergyman knowingly celebrating such a marriage, or being present at it, is subject 'to be suspended from his ministry 'for three years, and otherwise to be punished 'according to the laws.'—See Burn's Ecclesiastical Law, Article, *Marriage*, Title I.: and Blackstone, b. i. c. xv.

¹ Luke xx. 27, &c.

To J. B., Esq. Uxbridge.

“ SIR,

“ Aston Sandford,
July 24, 1815.

“ IF there were the least prospect of one letter settling your mind on the subject of your last, I should (though quite overdone with engagements,) not decline the service: but volumes after volumes, for a long course of years, have been found inadequate to decide the point in contest; and to engage in such a controversy privately, as I could do little in publicly, would be useless.

“ I am as much dissatisfied with Mr. ——’s arguments as you are, and was sorry that he engaged in the controversy: and I know no book that I can recommend as satisfactory on either side of the question. The dissenters constantly charge on us, what is not true, as to oaths, &c. In a pamphlet called ‘The Evils of Separation from the Church of England,’ published in Ireland, by the Rev. Peter Roe, Kilkenny, (sold by Seeley and Hatchard, London,) you will find thirty pages of my writing¹ on some of the great outlines of the argument; as well as the thoughts, moderate and candid at least, of several very pious clergymen, especially in Ireland. The object indeed is, to preserve men, already clergymen, from quitting the church at the instigation of the followers of Messrs. Haldane; and many of the statements do

¹ Since increased to ninety-seven pages. See second edition, of Scott’s Works, vol. ix.

not accord to the case of dissenters among us ; of whom there seem not to be many in Ireland.

“ One thing you will observe on my part of this pamphlet, namely, that I do not presume that all is exactly as it should be in the established church : but that I can find no other church, or company, where all things are exactly right, or by joining which I could improve my situation, or be more at liberty to act conscientiously in my ministry. This will lead you to conclude that I am not disposed, or prepared, to defend every thing in the church of England ; but only to show, that a minister may officiate and labour in the establishment conscientiously and usefully, without being required to do any thing which he regards as unlawful ; that is, with the views which I have of Christianity, and of the ministry.

“ You will observe, that the assent and consent to the whole of the Prayer Book is required only of those who are instituted to benefices ; and a man may officiate as a curate, &c., all his life, and never be called to make this strong and decided profession ; to which I can only be reconciled by the consideration, that it by no means is supposed to imply putting the Prayer Book on the footing of the Bible ; and by reflecting, that many things are wrong every where. But I wish it were done with.

“ I cannot but think, that further study, and careful examination of the words of our articles, would obviate your objections to subscription, in a general sense. Some hints in the pamphlet mentioned, as to the human authority objected to by dissenters, may be worth consideration.—Sub-

scription to the articles is not required of those who enter at Cambridge; nor till they take a degree.

“I think the objections made to the Burial Service, (by those who think ministers have any thing officially to do with burying the dead,) are ill grounded. The persons buried are unexcommunicated members of the church of England; at least professed Christians: ‘such as lay violent hands on themselves’ are excluded: and in many peculiar cases a clergyman might, without much censure, refuse to officiate. ‘We commit the body to the ground in sure and certain hope,’ (not of *his* or *her* resurrection to eternal life, but) in general, ‘of *the* resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ;’ while in all the rest the pronouns are expressly appointed and marked. We bury a professed Christian, in sure hope of the resurrection of all true Christians to eternal life; leaving the individual to the judgment of God, with only a general hope respecting him—‘as our hope is this our brother doth.’ And, in what ordinary cases would we say, I have *no hope*?—As to the word ‘brother’ or ‘brethren,’ the apostles used it respecting the persecuting Jews: and shall we object to it in respect of a professed Christian?

“I am not prepared to say so much of the objections to some expressions in the Baptismal Service, or in the Office of Confirmation: but *ubi plurima nitent, &c.*¹ I except *maculæ* every where.—I cannot see the second answer in the Catechism

¹ ‘Where so many things are excellent, I am not disposed to take offence at a few imperfections.’

to be so objectionable.¹ The sacraments must be rightly *received*, as well as rightly *administered*; they are doubtless means of grace; and, if circumcision was *the seal of the righteousness of faith*, why are not our sacraments pledges to assure him, who rightly receives them, of the inward and spiritual grace?

“But I desist: I feel no eagerness to induce you to prefer the establishment. In the present state of things, pious, zealous, and laborious dissenting ministers, (if not bigoted, censorious, and political,) as well as pious clergymen, are much wanted, and may be very useful. I question whether your previous habits, &c. will not make our armour to you like Saul’s to David. Were you a clergyman, I should bestow more pains to keep you among us.—There are some expressions in Mr. N. which I should object to, as you do: but, if you mean the remark of justification by faith *only*, not by faith *alone*, with reference to our article; it is so expressed as to be really unobjectionable.—Unless some special reason require it, I must beg to decline further interference. Spare my worn-out age!—May God direct and prosper you! make you blessed and a blessing!

“I am your’s faithfully,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

On this letter a few brief observations may be made.

1. With respect to the declaration of “assent

¹ See John xv. 2, Matt. viii. 2, for the latitude with which scripture uses such terms.

and consent" to the Prayer Book, there can be no doubt of the justness of the remark here made, that it certainly is not meant to put that book on the same footing with the Bible. And it is no unimportant remark, in considering the real import of the declaration.—Further, it is expressly stated in the act itself to be "to *the use* of all things" contained and prescribed, that the assent and consent are required: that is, I presume, that they may be lawfully used, and that the person will himself use them.—No such declaration, however, was deemed necessary till after the restoration of Charles II.

2. With respect to the expressions referred to in the Baptismal Service and the Office of Confirmation, it should be remembered, that the persons who engaged in the controversy against *certain representations* of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration never denied, that some things in the formularies of the church, *taken alone*, might seem to support the representation which they opposed: but they maintained, that, when those parts were interpreted by comparison with the Articles, Catechism, and other didactic writings of the church, and *the whole* taken together, it clearly appeared that such was not her doctrine.

3. On the general and just principle of the letter, that perfection is not to be expected, and that, where the mass is excellent, we ought not to be impatient under a few little things that might be improved, or that may even be thought objectionable; I would add the remark of an intelligent, and I believe really liberal-minded, dissenting minister—one, but not the only one, of that class, who

expressed to me a conviction, that baptismal regeneration, *in the obnoxious sense of the term*, had been *proved* not to be the doctrine of the established church. He said, "If your church is not to be assailed successfully upon general grounds, as an establishment, as requiring subscriptions, &c. &c., I shall be ashamed to attempt it upon the ground of particular expressions that may seem objectionable. I am so sensible of the excellence and superior character of your liturgy, that I feel we should be very impolitic thus to provoke a comparison of our own services with it, which must from their nature be liable to so many more imperfections."

To a Lady.

ON THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

"DEAR MADAM,

"Aston Sandford,
March 18, 1816.

"I SHOULD have been extremely surprised at receiving a letter from you, had I not had a previous intimation that perhaps it might be so; but I still wonder that, connected and situated as you are, you should consult me: but perhaps you think that, at least, I shall be more impartial than relative affection might allow some others to be. I shall however make no demur at answering your inquiries in the best manner I am able; though your desire to receive an early answer, connected with the time that a letter takes in making its way hence to ——, gives me less leisure for deli-

beration than might have been desirable. But I pray God to direct me to those thoughts which are suitable to the case, and which he may bless to the healing of your wounded spirit.

“ Had I received the letter from a perfect stranger in all respects, I should have answered your main and most awful question without hesitation in the negative: but what you state of yourself in past years is so simple, and has such internal evidence in it of being genuine, and so accords to what I suppose to have been fact; that, joined with some other circumstances, it frees my mind from any prevalent doubting, not only as to that main question, but as to your sincerity in your present profession of repentance, faith, and love to the ways of the Lord.

“ But I will first state my reason for decidedly judging that you have not sinned the sin against the Holy Spirit. I need not inform you what the judgment of the best theologians is on that unpardonable sin: but I would remind you that, whatever it be, *it is a crime committed deliberately* against conscience and conviction, from malignant enmity against the truth as it is in Jesus: such as was shown by Caiaphas, and the Pharisees, scribes, and priests in our Lord’s time, and after his resurrection; and by some apostates, as Alexander the coppersmith.—Again, it is a sin *which they who have committed can never repent of. It is impossible to renew them to repentance.* (Heb. vi. 6.) When the apostle exhorts Timothy *to instruct in meekness those who oppose themselves*, he adds, *If peradventure God will give them repentance.* (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.) The *peradventure* is concerning

God's giving them repentance, not concerning the forgiveness of the penitent. The blood of Christ *cleanses from all sin* : but it cleanses none except the believer. It is *sufficient* for all sin ; would be for this sin also, if it were possible for those who have committed it to believe with a true faith. (Of your case in this respect a few words presently.) —I therefore state the matter thus. No sin can be pardoned but to the penitent and believing : every sin is pardoned to the penitent and believing : and none who repent and believe can possibly have committed that sin ; because they who have committed it are always given up to impenitence and unbelief, either in total desperation, (a very rare case,) or in daring presumption, or in careless insensibility. Now your letter is no more like any of these, than 'sensibly alive all o'er, to smart and agonize at every pore,' is like death or mortification.—Our Lord's words are very strong on another subject, *Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven* : (Matt. x. 32.) yet Peter thrice denied Christ, and with oaths and execrations ; but it was not of *deliberate wickedness*, and it was not *persisted in* : he repented, and was pardoned and restored. However our Lord's threefold question, about his love of him, was afterwards a cutting and grieving rebuke of Peter's threefold, though unpremeditated and deeply repented denial of him. (John xxi. 15—17.)

“One word more of the few who are hardened in despair. I believe I once knew one : but, while he had health, he desperately employed himself as a tempter of others, especially to impious contempt

and opposition to the gospel ; and, when he lay a dying, the very mention of mercy, or of the love of Christ, or the attempt to pray with him, urged him to rage, and almost blasphemy. Did he, or do such, seek earnestly, wait, pray, persevere under discouragement, &c., as you describe your case and conduct? No : it is not the dejection of fear, remorse, tenderness, self-abasement, cries for mercy, intreating the prayers of others, trembling for fear of presuming, showing active love to the cause and people of God, more than before : no, it is diabolical despair and enmity. *What have I to do with Jesus? Let me alone : Torment me not.*—But such cases are extremely rare.—In short, I am of opinion that not one of the many trembling souls, who fancy they have committed this sin, can possibly have committed it ; and that they who are given up, as Ahab, and Pharaoh, and many others in various ways, to final hardness, scarcely ever suspect it ; but often *rage and are confident*. (Prov. xiv. 16.)—I consider nothing in the case you state of the horrid thought suggested to your mind, and for the moment, as it were, welcomed, as peculiar, except the *strangeness* of the thought. But temptations follow tempers ; and your reasoning mind, and proneness to nervous affections, and a degree of melancholy, united to open a way to this peculiar idea. I can, however, easily conceive it to have been suggested to the purest mind of man : and in all mere men the enemy has a party : none could ever say, *The tempter cometh and hath nothing in me*, except the holy Jesus. If then suggested to the holiest mind of an imperfect man, it might possibly find some combustible to kindle

on, and a transient sort of consent to it might take place. If the mind were in a very vigilant state, it would however be soon quenched by faith, and abhorred decidedly : but, if the mind were unwatchful at the time and afterwards, it might be forgotten, and thought little of till something called it to remembrance ; when perhaps it might make way for a series of temptations of another kind. But, if it had arisen in a mind capable at the time of the desperate enmity of deliberately and perseveringly ascribing the miracles of love, wrought by the holy Jesus, to Beelzebub, &c. it would not have lain dormant ; but would have excited you, as it did those who did this, to desperate acts of enmity to God, and his cause, and people ; for the crucifixion of Christ, and the persecution of his apostles, were only carrying the same disposition, which those sentences expressed, into action : and Alexander the coppersmith *did much evil* to the apostle and his helpers : and all, I apprehend, of such apostates are disposed to do this, though sometimes restrained.—Were all the most eminent servants of God to relate all that has at some times passed through their minds ; each would have to adduce something of a similar kind ; but in general such things cannot be published. John Bunyan (who doubtless was a sterling character,) was long harassed, and almost driven to despair, by something very similar ; as he has stated in his ‘Grace abounding to the chief of Sinners.’

“ Upon the whole, nothing can be this sin, which is transient, insulated, not persisted in, repented of, and deplored, as this and other things

in your life past evidently are : at least, so it is in my judgment.

“ In respect of the candid and open account you give of the past ; I might give it as my opinion that there was *true grace* producing in part its effects, but borne down by various inward and outward circumstances ; and I must own it led me to reflect on many things in myself, with shame and sorrow. Perhaps I might almost adopt Bunyan’s words, and say, there was ‘ no betterment betwixt us : ’ but your’s has been peculiarly a perilous situation. The attentions paid on personal and relative grounds have been of an ensnaring tendency : whereas my unpopularity in town rescued me from many snares.—I do not however think that it is at all necessary for you to determine as to the past, or expedient to attempt it. I am satisfied of this, there is nothing in the past to exclude you from now finding mercy : and, though the Lord may see good to make you wait for comfort, as he has long *waited to be gracious* ; only persevere, and the opening of the xiith of Isaiah will ere long be your joyful song.—When you say, ‘ I long for his salvation, deliverance from the power of sin, &c., and, from a grateful love to my deliverer, to give myself up to his service without reserve, and *to live no longer to myself, &c.* ’ you speak the language of genuine lively faith, though you seem to think you have it not : but you mean the joy and comfort of it, or the *assurance of hope*. You express exactly the faith of *adherence* ; and he that longs, and mourns, and waits, and prays, as truly believes as

he who exults and rejoices. In short, you must go on to *sow in tears*, that you may *reap in joy*.

“As to your question about the Lord’s supper; I should give it as my opinion, that you never were in a frame of mind more suited to a due commemoration of the Saviour’s dying love than at present; and that it is not unlikely that, while in deep self-abasement, and entire reliance on his atonement and grace, yet with tears and trembling, you wait on him in his own appointed way, your burden may be removed, or at least may be lightened.—But here you have counsellors on the spot whose judgment you may safely rely upon.—In respect of what I said before, I would add, that I have *lately* thought that we all, who can afford it, have too much given into a sort of measured self-indulgence; that I have been much led away with it; and should both prescribe other rules to myself, and enforce them on affluent professors of the gospel, if my time were to be spent over again.—I trust I shall not forget to pray for you, and I hope I shall have to join in praising the Lord for you. If it would be any relief I shall readily answer another letter.

“I remain, dear madam,

“Your sincere friend and servant,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

To a Clergyman.

ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
TO THE SICK.

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“Aston Sandford,
August 22, 1817.

“THAT part of your letter which refers to the spirit, and manner, and earnestness of heart with which you visit the sick and dying, requires no other answer than an expression of my full approbation, and a prayer that you may be assisted and directed from above to accomplish your pious and benevolent purposes with the happiest effects.

“I can also easily suppose that the young woman's mother might, on the subject mentioned, speak in a manner by no means proper or respectful: many allowances must be made for her, both from her station and habits in life, and from some particulars in her views of the gospel. If however she spake in a manner which Moses could hardly have ‘borne without *speaking unadvisedly with his lips* ;’ I doubt not but you recollect that, notwithstanding the provocation which Moses had received, he was warned by the rebuke of God that he needed repentance and forgiveness, and prayer for still more meekness and patience: and that, though he harshly called the people *rebels*, (as indeed they were,) yet he never afterwards, on that account, relaxed in his *work and labour of love* for their good, even to

the end of his life. You will recollect also that Samuel, when the people very injuriously and contemptuously refused to let him any longer rule over them, was still ready to teach them and pray for them. In this view I should advise you to visit, talk to, and pray with the sick young woman as usual, omitting, unless mentioned by her or her parents, the further urging her to receive the Lord's supper. I suppose Mr. — has visited her occasionally for a long time. I should not notice it, if he thus visited one whom I also visited.

“But the main subject of your letter yet remains; and in respect of that I apprehend that my views are something circumstantially, at least, different from your's. Many, indeed all dissenters, or nearly, with evangelical church-people who have been a good deal among them, consider the Lord's supper as so exclusively a public ordinance, as to think the administration of it in a sick-room altogether improper and superstitious. But I do not go so far on that side, as these do: and I see no reason why one who had before been an approved communicant, when confined to a sick-room, may not, with three or four fellow Christians, commemorate his dying Lord as well in his chamber as at the church; or why one whose repentance and faith are satisfactorily evidenced, though not before a communicant, may not in such circumstances for the first time receive the Lord's supper with acceptance, profit, and comfort. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them:* and the Lord's supper was instituted in a private room,

not in a place of worship. Still, however, I am decidedly of opinion that the administering of the Lord's supper in private to sick and dying persons, and especially *urging* them to receive it, as if a matter, *in their circumstances*, of special importance, is of most injurious and often fatal effect; particularly to those whose *first* religious convictions and impressions appear during their sickness. In their case, the grand object should be to lead them to rest all their hope of mercy and salvation, in a scriptural manner, on the right foundation, Christ crucified, by humble penitent faith alone; and to guard them against every species of false confidence. Now to persons of this description, whose knowledge and experience must be small, no danger seems to me so imminent, as that of mistaking a reliance on the outward and visible sign of salvation, for the thing signified under that outward sign and seal: and I cannot doubt that, even among protestants, (not to say papists, for it is the grand delusion of popery,) thousands and tens of thousands, after a life of ungodliness, get a false peace and confidence in their dying hours, by receiving the Lord's supper, and so trusting in the sacrament instead of receiving Christ, and trusting in him by simple humble faith alone. Nor can I doubt that the general visiting of the sick, and administering the Lord's supper indiscriminately to all who desire it, and pressing those who do not, (however well intended,) is productive of awful consequences in a vast proportion of instances (could we penetrate the veil and see them) in the deceased: while it leads the survivors to think that a life of religion is not neces-

sary to a peaceful death ; that they have only at last to send for the clergyman, and receive the Lord's supper, and all will be well. 'Observe,' say they, 'how comfortable such a one was, after he had received the sacrament, and how happily he died !'

"I am always, in visiting the sick who have not been before decidedly pious, far more afraid of their being over-confident and comfortable, than of the contrary : as I know (in former years long past,) by *experience*, and have long learned by *observation*, that it is comparatively easy to render a man who knows little of God, of himself, of the evil of sin, and of the nature of conversion, quiet at the approach of death : but this is the ease of mortification or death, not of health. I have therefore never, I believe, for the last forty years, proposed to a sick person, who had not before been a communicant, or considered as a proper person to become one, to receive the Lord's supper : and in nineteen instances out of twenty I have evaded it, when desired by them, and in very few instances been induced to comply, when not myself fully satisfied that the person was a true penitent believer : and on those few instances I look back with regret. I had rather a hundred true penitent believers should leave the world without the sacrament on a death-bed, than that one improper person should receive it from my hands.

"To remember the dying love of Christ, in this institution, is indeed a duty ; but not, as justice and mercy are, an immediate duty of all men. All ought indeed to believe : but, till a man does actually believe, receiving the Lord's supper is so

far from a duty, that it is a very heinous sin ; (as the offices of our church fully declare :) and to a man who himself has not reason to conclude that he is a believer it is no duty, till, having *examined himself whether he be in the faith*, he becomes in some degree satisfied on that point. And if, on a sick-bed, either he or his pastor remain in hesitation on this point ; it is better to exhort him to put his whole trust and confidence in the blood, and righteousness, and grace of Christ alone, crying for mercy with his dying breath, than to risk the danger of leading him to a false confidence, and so speaking *peace, where there is no peace*.

“I am persuaded, from the language of your letter, that you do not go on that broad general ground, respecting the pressing or administering of the sacrament, which has been described : but yet you speak in a manner which seems to indicate, that increasing comfort and hope were the objects to be aimed at, and the blessings especially to be expected in performing this duty ; without expressing any fear of an ungrounded confidence and hope : and therefore I have taken the liberty, which you will excuse, of stating my views to you. —The blessings to be expected, by a due receiving of the Lord’s supper, are increase of faith and grace : but, without previous repentance and faith, it cannot be duly received ; and he, who has true repentance and faith, will be assuredly saved, whether he receive the Lord’s supper or not ; nay, even if his own error or fault, or the improper counsel of a minister or parent should prevent it. And, though God is not limited, it is not once, either in scripture or by our church, considered

as a *converting* means of grace. Receiving the Lord's supper is making a profession of those things in which genuine Christianity consists. It is saying, 'I believe that I am that lost sinner who must have perished if Christ had not come to save the lost: I believe him to be the Son of God; and that his blood, shed in immense love to lost sinners, is an all-sufficient atonement: in this persuasion, I repent of all sin, renounce all other confidence, receive Christ as my Saviour, 'feed on him in my heart by faith with thanksgiving,' yield myself to his service, and join myself to his people, &c. : and, in avowing this at the Lord's table, I avow that I put no trust in that act of obedience; but offer it as 'a sacrifice of thanksgiving,' acceptable only through his sacrifice of atonement as signified by it. Now these things are those which *accompany salvation* inseparably, whether the sacrament be received or not. Numbers think that the public congregation is the *only* proper place of making this profession; and all must think that it is the *most* proper place. Now, if a person could, with humble confidence before God, make this profession; and would do it if he could go to the house of God; yet should continue to think, to the end of life, that the privacy of a sick-room did not suit it; or that the public honour to Christ, and edifying example to his neighbours, in making it, were at least as much, or even more the design of Christ in this appointment, than any personal comfort and advantage; and that the sick-room was not fitted for this purpose; and should silently and meekly (as the young woman did, as I understand you,)

decline the urgent proposal of a minister to administer it; I should not at all think the worse of his state: but I should think the worse of it, should he eagerly catch at it; fearing lest he should be mistaking the shadow for the substance; and perhaps even questioning whether he could, with intelligence and strict sincerity before God, make the expressed or implied profession; without which it must be a nullity, or even worse.

“On these views I grounded my advice respecting your renewing (without express solicitation,) your visits, and avoiding that one subject in your converse with her. May the Lord direct, and counsel, and prosper you, in all your endeavours to promote his cause; and may your own soul and family richly share the blessing!

“I remain, rev. and dear sir,

“Your faithful friend and servant,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

To the Rev. G. Knight, Harwell.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Aston Sandford,
Jan. 7, 1818.

“I SHALL be ready to give you my counsel on the question which you propose, and the case which you state: and I pray God to teach me what counsel to give; for, as I am of opinion that many, whom I ought to consider as more competent judges than myself, will counsel differently, I feel the greater hesitation.

“However, as far as I can judge from your statement, I should not find myself at liberty to advise your friend to accept an offered chaplaincy; much less to apply for one. At forty-five years old,

men's habits, &c. are fixed ; and that versatility, and readiness at accommodating themselves to new scenes, places, and employments, which at an earlier period would not have been difficult, are very rarely seen at so advanced an age : while no small part of the probable term of allotted years would be past, before an entrance could well be made on new scenes of service.

“ I even still more object to what you state, as the leading, and almost exclusive *motive*. I am the more disposed to this, because I always resisted, *as a temptation*, the suggestion of such a motive : and, though my family was not so large as your friend's, yet my income for years was wholly insufficient for its maintenance. Unexpected helps alone kept me from being overwhelmed with debt ; nor had I, till long after I came to this place, any thing for my family, or even sufficient, without my furniture, to meet my debts. A most unexpected interposition of Christian friends, many of them unknown, has set me at ease, personally : but I have very little to leave to my many grandchildren ; whose parents in general are nearly, though not quite, in the same situation as to their families as I was. *God hath fed me all my life long*. I die, but God can provide for my children, and children's children, without me ; I cannot without him. I have not since I came here, allowing for my house, cleared 100*l.* a year : yet the Lord hath provided ; and I live in plenty, and can give something : and, if more money were good for me, he would give it. But I never went a step out of my way in order to make provision, &c. Now I must think your friend

would go out of the way, in quitting his present line and prospects, where he has doubtless obtained a measure of influence and good-will by his labours, to go into India, where probably he would not soon acquire the same. Any thing, that should come in his own line, unsolicited, or not eagerly solicited, I should not object to: but I own that to go to India, in hopes of providing for his family, seems to me a *carnal* step: and I shall exceedingly wonder if even in this respect, should he proceed, his aim and expectation do not end in disappointment.

“When I, almost forty years since, spoke to good Mr. Newton on a subject not quite dissimilar, he told me a story of a nobleman, who was selected as ambassador by his king, but excused himself on the ground of his family, and urgent concerns at home; but was answered, You must go: only do you mind my concerns heartily, and I will take care of your’s. ‘Thus,’ said Mr. N. ‘God as it were says to you.’ I took this as he said it, and have acted on it ever since; and often recommend it to my sons: and I am thankful that I did so take it.

“I often think what St. Paul would say to ministers in our days, on this ground; when of those in his days he says, *All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.* (See my note on the passage.) I have long lamented that we cannot serve God by the day, and leave it to him to provide day by day for us and our’s.

“But I must close. My health is not materially worse than when I had the pleasure of seeing you. I need your prayers far more than you

suppose. My kind remembrances to Mrs. K. May God bless you and your's, and make this to you a happy year!

"Your faithful friend and brother,

"THOMAS SCOTT."

To the Rev. Daniel Wilson.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Aston Sandford,
May 17, 1818.

"WITH deep sympathy and sorrow I heard, on my son and daughter's return from town, of your late heavy and very affecting family trials: and, though I am fully aware that I can suggest no consolatory topics but what have already occurred to your own mind, yet I feel a sort of powerful impulse to write to you on the occasion, at least to show that I feel for you and Mrs. Wilson, &c.

"You, my dear sir, are highly favoured and honoured in your public ministry and sphere of usefulness: in these our favoured times we are greatly exempted from that counterbalance, which persecution has generally furnished to those who were rendered eminently and extensively useful: yet it is necessary for all of us to have a counterbalance, in one way or other. In fact we are all, at present, like patients in an hospital, though convalescent in different degrees; and our great and unerring Physician appoints us severally, according to his wise and faithful love, our medicines: they are exactly suited to our case, yet we often feel as if we should have preferred any other to that allotted us. The event, however, will show us that it was the best possible. Some

of the Lord's servants are tried with depressing poverty; others with disease and pain; others with dreadful inward conflicts and temptations; and others in their families: but all have their trials. *As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.*

“About thirty-eight years since I had three children. First one pined away, and died a babe: then my eldest, four years and a half old, endeared to me in a manner and degree that I cannot express, was in full health, delighting me with her questions and observations, at four o'clock in the afternoon, and was a corpse the next morning before ten. Tongue cannot express all my mingled feelings; but at first, and indeed long, they were most acute. I even still seem to feel the stroke. In a very short time, my only remaining child was seized with the same disease, and seemed almost beyond hope of recovery. I bore up before tolerably well; but then I thought I should quite sink: I felt as if my very heart would break. I went out, however, according to my usual plan at that time, into the fields, to pour out my heart before God: and, after having prayed with many tears, for a considerable time, with much liberty, I summed up the whole, as it were, in this petition: That, notwithstanding my acute feelings, if the Lord saw that the recovery and life of my child would not be for good and useful purposes, that he might rather die, than live to serve sin and do mischief: but that, if he would be pleased to employ him in his service, especially as his minister, he would spare and recover him. I returned home calm and resigned. My child, from that time, began to recover; and this is my eldest

son, at Hull.—On the review afterwards, I do not in the least except these trying scenes from the general grateful acknowledgment, *Surely mercy and goodness have followed me all the days of my life.* And, I doubt not, you will look back upon your present affecting trials, at length, in the same manner as I do on the scene which I have described.

“ It was a remarkable circumstance, that I was preaching a course of lectures on the beginning of Job, at the time of my eldest child’s death : and the text in order for the next lecture was, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord ;* which accordingly I preached on with much feeling, and apparent effect.

“ I will only call your attention further to the remarkable passage in 2 Cor. i. 4—7. I doubt not that your trials, and your consolations under them, are intended for the good of your people ; and that they will eventually derive rich benefit from them : and that, while a present interruption may be given to your useful labours, you will proceed in them with redoubled animation and success in due time. And whatsoever, in any way, is eventually rendered conducive to our own spiritual good, and to our increasing usefulness in this evil world, will be recognized among our mercies in due time. *Be then strong, and he shall comfort thine heart, and put thou thy trust in the Lord.*—My poor prayers for you and your’s have not been omitted : may the Lord spare to you your remaining children, and render them comforts to you, and blessed themselves, and

blessings to many !—I remain, with kindest remembrance to Mrs. W., dear sir,

“ Your faithful friend and brother,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

To the Rev. W. Gray, West Rounton, Yorkshire.

“ REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“ Aston Sandford
February 10, 1821.

“ I WOULD not delay to reply to the inquiry contained in your very friendly and pleasing letter; though I can spare but little of my time for correspondence.

“ I cannot conceive from what the report which you have heard, of certain books which I so strongly recommended, could arise: for, having been struck, and not a little grieved, at the partial and injudicious commendations of this and the other book, given by persons of considerable eminence, I have always made a point not to give any such recommendations, aware that I also might have my prejudices and partialities. The report, however, is totally groundless. In the preface which I annexed to my notes on Bunyan's Pilgrim, I spoke of it as a book which had been peculiarly useful, and was likely to continue so: but there were eminent ministers before Bunyan wrote, and are and will be among those who never saw the Pilgrim's Progress.

“ It is many years since I read Grotius de Veritate: but my idea is, that the arguments contained in it have been so retailed; and that many parts of it are so undecided, or erroneous, as to what constitutes Christianity; that on the whole I think it is a book, at present, of inferior value.—

Walker of Truro has been one among my favourite divines : yet some things in his excellent Lectures on the Church Catechism I could not subscribe ; though the applications are admirable.—Edwards of New England, especially on the Affections, and his Life of Brainerd, I have been much indebted to : yet I differ in some points from him also.

“ But I need not enlarge : *Prove all things by the law and the testimony, and hold fast that which is good*, as far as you, by study and prayer, can discover it. And, when you read any of my poor attempts, prove them in like manner : use my spectacles candidly, but see with your own eyes ; only praying, *Open thou mine eyes that I may see the wondrous things of thy law !*

“ I am thankful for any information which gives me reason to hope that my labours have not been wholly in vain : but I am now old, infirm, and diseased ; in the last week of my seventy-fourth year ; and I greatly need more patience, fortitude, and hope ; and shall value your prayers for me in those respects especially.—When you see Mr. Richardson, or any at York who know me, remember me to them, in Christian respect and affection, I pray God to bless you and all your's with the best of blessings ; and to make you a blessing to numbers in your stated and occasional services.

“ I remain, rev. and dear sir,

“ Your sincere and obliged friend and servant,

“ THOMAS SCOTT.”

This letter bears a later date than any other in the collection—little more than two months before the writer's decease. The following number consists of *papers* rather than *letters*.

XII.

ON QUESTIONS DISCUSSED AT CLERICAL
MEETINGS.

Addressed to the Rev. G. Knight, Harwell.

1816—1820.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Aston Sandford,
June 17, 1816.

“As wholly unable to meet you in person, I send you my proxy, in a paper of hints on your most important question.

“Should any brother undertake to form a paper for publication from the whole result of the discussion, he is perfectly at liberty to use my hints for that purpose: but, if this be not determined on, I shall be glad to receive them back again; as probably I may make some use of them hereafter; and I shall also gladly receive any of the remarks which my brethren make on them, or on the general subject.

“I hope I shall not forget to pray for a large blessing on the company and the congregations; for my heart will be with you: and I trust you will be particular, both when together and when separate, in praying for me; not for my life, or

health, or even ease, so much as that I may be upheld, and enabled to act consistently in my closing scene, and may *finish my course with joy, &c.*: for I feel myself a poor, weak, and sinful creature, in constant danger of falling or fainting, unless upheld by the power and grace of the Lord Jesus. With my kind remembrances to Mrs. Knight, and prayers for a blessing on you and your family, and Christian love to all the assembled brethren, I remain,

“Your faithful and affectionate brother,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“*Thoughts on the words of St. Paul to Timothy, GIVE THYSELF WHOLLY TO THEM, (ἐν τέτοις ἰσθί,) considered as an instruction to all ministers of Christianity, in every age and nation.*

“The context of this expressive clause should be considered with peculiar attention, in explaining the words made use of. *Let no man despise thy youth: but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee—by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things, GIVE THYSELF WHOLLY TO THEM; that thy profiting may appear unto all. Take heed to thyself, and to the doctrine: continue in them: for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. (1 Tim. iv. 12—14.)* Each expression, when closely examined, is as it

were a sermon ; and the whole comprises such a mass of appropriate instruction, warning, and encouragement to ministers, as can rarely be found in so few words. Let us then *meditate on these things* continually.

“Two particulars seem especially to call for our notice in the clause more immediately under consideration : 1. The *things* which the apostle intended : and 2. What it is to *give ourselves wholly to them*.

“I. The things intended.—The apostle doubtless referred to those exhortations, which he had just before given to his beloved son Timothy, respecting his personal conduct and example ; his ministerial office, as a talent entrusted to him ; the exercise of this ministry ; the preparation for that exercise ; and the ends to be proposed in the whole—*Continue in them, for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee* ; that is, who so hear thee as to believe and obey the doctrine taught by thee.

“A few hints may then be here dropped on some of the particulars relating to our *important* ministry—for we cannot too much *magnify our office*, and should have high and honourable thoughts of it ; as the best of all good works ; the most beneficial service which man can perform to man ; and the most immediately connected with the glory of God our Saviour ; yet attended with the most awful responsibility. It is a *gift* conferred on us, when set apart to that service. To us it is GIVEN, *to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ*. It is a *talent* entrusted to our stewardship, which demands faithful improvement. It

opens the way to the cultivation of the mind for purposes peculiar to the minister ; to purposes of the highest importance ; and in which, if he do not neglect it, *his profiting may appear unto all men* ; not only when he sets out as a young and inexperienced minister, but even if he had attained to Timothy's competency, nay to that of *Paul the aged* himself—except as inspiration and miraculous powers are concerned : and from these the *gift* here spoken of, at least in applying it to us, should be considered as entirely distinct.—He that would be *apt to teach* must be apt to learn, and always learning to the end of life : else (as is, alas, too often the case,) he will be like those who spend much and gain little, and are always in penury.—In this general office and stewardship, the apostle would probably, if he spake to us in modern language, and according to *our* situation as pastors, point out the *public* exercise of our ministry, statedly or occasionally, *instant* *ἐνκαίρως ἀκαίρως* ; with many things concerning our doctrine, our motives, our spirit, &c.—He would advert to the more *private* exercise of our ministry *from house to house*, according to the various openings which are afforded us of privately warning, instructing, counselling, and comforting, the healthy and the sick, and those around the sick ; or in teaching children, and in various other ways.—He would note those things which should be attended to by us in the *study*, by reading and writing, and preparing for our public ministry, or aiming at accessional usefulness by our studies and publications. The fisherman, when not fishing, is employed in washing or mending his nets, repairing

his boat, &c., that he may be ready for the next expected opportunity; or to seize on one that he did not expect.—Especially, the apostle would point out what is to be done in the *closet*, by our earnest and constant prayers and supplications. (Compare Col. ii 1. iv. 12.)—He would go with us into our *families*; and lead us to consider the importance of so *commanding our children and our households*, (Gen. xviii. 19,) and so governing them, that every thing, as far as we possibly can, may bear the holy stamp of our sacred office. Here a large field opens before us, of family instruction and worship; of educating our children; of our conversation before them, and our domestics and friends, &c., in order by every means to fix the impression, that we deeply mean *all* which we deliver from the pulpit: for alas, too often, the conduct and conversation of the dining and drawing room renders this at least very doubtful, to those who more narrowly inspect our conduct.—The apostle would even attend us on our visits, our journeys, our seasons of relaxation, &c. and remind us, that we must never forget, not only our *Christian*, but our *ministerial* character. All must be stamped with its holiness; all must be a part of a system, strictly adhered to, of being constantly *learning*, and waiting the opportunity of *imparting* what we have learned, in the things of God.

“I might go into all our *needful* intercourse with *those without*, and our concerns in the world as they relate to temporal things, or to any employments in which it may be expedient to engage, in connexion with our ministry: in short,

to our whole example; an example not only to the world, but *to believers*. But these hints must suffice.

“ II. The import of the words rendered, *Give thyself wholly to them*.—I remember that Demosthenes somewhere uses the same or an entirely similar expression concerning himself, and his application to public affairs: he was always the statesman: his time, his talents, his heart, his all, were swallowed up, as it were, in this one object. And in fact no man ever became very eminent in any line, when this was not his plan. It is noted by some writer concerning Bonaparte, that he never went to any town, or city, or country, new to him, but immediately he was examining and considering where would be the best place for a castle or a camp, for an ambushment or an attack, for the means of defence or annoyance. He thus, in his line, entered into the spirit of the clause ἐν τέτοις ἰσθί; always the general.—Our Lord says of himself, *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work*: and his whole time and soul were engaged in it. The apostles say, *We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word*: we will not suffer even things good in themselves (as *serving tables*,) to take us off from these grand and essential employments. Much less would they have left them, for secular interests or trivial pursuits. They entered into the spirit of the clause under consideration.

“ Let these things then have our *whole time*: let even recreation and animal refreshment be so regulated, moderated, and subordinated, that they

may not interfere with our grand employment, or unfit us for it ; but rather recruit and prepare us for it, that they may all become subservient to our main object.—Prudent men of the world know how to do this, in respect of their object : and will neither let meals, nor sleep, nor visits, nor diversions interfere with it ; but endeavour in all these to promote it by means of them. They enter into the spirit of the clause, and of the words used elsewhere, *Redeeming the time*.

“ Let these things have our whole *mind*, or capacity, natural ability, genius, learning : whatever we have or are, or can attain to, let these things have the *whole*. Wherever the bees collect the honey, they bring it all to the hive. Let us give all our powers and talents to our highly important service ; and not for a moment admit an idea of employing genius or learning to other purposes, foreign to our ministry. *The vows of God are upon us* : at least I feel this to be my case ; for, almost forty years since, I solemnly *vowed* before God not to engage in any literary pursuit or publication, however creditable or lucrative it might be, which had not the religious instruction of mankind for its immediate¹ object.

“ All our *reading* ought to be subservient to this. We may read any books, ancient or modern, sacred or profane, infidel, heretical, or what not ; but always *as ministers* :² to note such things as may the better enable us to defend, and plead for, *the truth as it is in Jesus* ; never merely for amusement, or curiosity, or love of learning,

¹ Life, p. 101, 102, (103.)

² See above, p. 206.

simply for its own sake, or for the credit or advantages derived from it.

“ Let these things have our whole *heart*. We shall never fall in with the apostle’s counsel, unless our ministry and its employments be our *pleasure* and *delight* ; unless our warmest affections are excited by it, and our sweetest gratifications derived from it.—Connected with this, however, our keenest sorrows and regrets will also thus be stirred.—But our whole soul and heart must be in it. We must count it both our work and our wages ; our business and our pleasure ; our interest and our honour ; and, in connexion with *saving ourselves* along with *those that hear us*, OUR ALL.—*Nothing* moved the apostle, in his various pursuits ; he did not think even his life *dear to himself*, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And neither the smiles nor frowns of men ; neither worldly gain nor loss ; nor yet privations, hardships, delays, disappointments, will move us, if we enter into his spirit, and copy his example.

“ We must, as has been said, remember that we are the ministers of the holy Jesus ; the shepherds of his flock ; the stewards of his mysteries ; his messengers of reconciliation to perishing sinners : and we must never go any where, or do any thing, so as to lay aside this our sacred character.—Is a man invited by neighbours or superiors ? Let him decline the invitation, if he cannot in such a visit speak and act as a minister ; studying that dignified, yet meek and unaffected

manner, in which Christ improved such seasons and opportunities, as openings to most important instruction.—Does he journey? Let even the coach, or the inns, or the ship, be improved as openings for communicating, in one way or other, useful instruction :¹ and, if this should prove impracticable, let him at least learn some lessons concerning the human heart, and the aims and pursuits of worldly men, which may render him more competent to meet the thoughts, plans, and consciences of his hearers. He may thus be *learning* when he cannot *teach*; and *gleaning* when he cannot *reap*.—Does he, for the sake of recruiting health and spirits, retire to some watering place, or other scene of relaxation? Let him not divest himself of his ministerial character, as is sometimes done, if not, alas! of the Christian character also: but let him still be prompt at learning, and apt to seize any opportunity of teaching; and at least preserve himself, and those belonging to him, from giving any countenance to the festivity, frivolity, and dissipation of such scenes.

“ Does he teach pupils privately, or at a public seminary? Still let him do it as a Christian minister; and endeavour, by *wise* (Jam. i. 5.) and persevering endeavours, to train up his pupils for Jesus Christ. In reading with them the classics, for instance, let him intersperse remarks on the falsity of their principles, the fallacy of their reasoning, the tendency of their writings; comparing their maxims with those of Solomon, and

¹ Life, p. 319—321. (327—331.)

with the words of Christ and his apostles, on similar subjects and occasions : and in every way let it appear in his conduct respecting them, that he is far more earnestly desirous of imparting good to them, than of deriving advantage from them ; remembering our Lord's saying, *It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

“ The same principles are applicable to a variety of other particulars. But I have already too much enlarged.—These things adverted to, will effectually keep the ministers of Christ from meriting the charge brought against the priests by Malachi, i. 10 ; and even from exciting a feeling in those of decided zeal, like St. Paul's, when he said, *All seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ.* Love of *filthy lucre*, and empty praise and popularity, will not then warp their minds ; but they will *feed the flock of God, taking the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but as examples to the flock : and, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.* (1 Pet. v. 2—4.)

“ P.S. When Nehemiah had related the progress made in a short time in building the wall of Jerusalem, in the midst of dangers and opposition ; he says, *The people had a mind to work.* They were not *paid* for their work ; but incurred expense and danger about it : but the object was so near their hearts, that they had a *mind to work* ; and thus great things were done in a little time.—Oh, if all Christians and ministers had thus a *mind*

to work, for nothing, when good might be done ; how much might be effected !—He that is willing to work for *nothing* will never complain that he has nothing to do.—Yet the principle that made the apostles determine not *to serve tables*, though a good work in itself, should render ministers, in this day, very careful not so to give their services, even to the most useful societies, and to attending the meetings of them, as to prevent their giving themselves continually *to the word of God and prayer*. A danger at present seems to arise on this side.

“Mr. Cecil used to say, that the devil did not care how ministers were employed, if not in their proper work ; whether in hunting and field sports ; at cards and assemblies ; in writing notes on the classics ; or in politics, &c. It was all one to him ; each might please his own taste.”

To a Clerical Society, on the question, Is it a fact that faithful parochial Ministers, as they advance in Life, frequently lose the Esteem they had obtained, and decline in apparent Usefulness ? and, if so, what may be learned from it ? and, how may such Declension be most probably avoided ?

“DEAR BRETHREN,

“Aston Sandford,
June 21, 1819.

“THE question which you propose to discuss, at your meeting, is of great importance and difficulty, and I do not feel myself competent to throw much light upon it.

“That such declension in acceptance and apparent usefulness is not unfrequently observed in the case of pious and faithful ministers, whether parish ministers or not, or whether towards the close of life or at an earlier period, is certainly a fact; a fact often greatly afflictive to them, and discouraging to other labourers; but most deplorable as to their flock.

“When we say *pious* and *faithful*, we do not mean *perfect* in piety, faithfulness, wisdom, and holiness; but upright, true, and exemplary ministers. Yet, if any were perfectly what they ought to be, this would by no means secure them from this trial.”

“When we consider blessed Paul complaining that *all they of Asia had forsaken him*, however we may qualify the meaning; that his children in Galatia, who once were *ready to pull out their eyes, and give them to him*, counted him *their enemy, because he told them the truth*; and recollect what a long and laboured controversy he found it requisite to hold both with the Galatians and the Corinthians; we must perceive, that no new or strange thing hath happened unto us, if we meet with similar discouragements. Even the holy Jesus, *who spake as never man spake*, had the thousands which attended him, as stated in the beginning of the vith of John, reduced to the twelve apostles, before the close of it; and the hosannas of the multitudes were soon changed into *Crucify him*; when even his own apostles *forsook him and fled*.

“But, in the most general case, there is something wrong or defective in the ministers themselves, which concurs both with the fickleness of

the people and the other causes in producing this effect.

“1. It is a maxim with me, that INDULGED CHILDREN ALWAYS ARE A ROD BY WHICH GOD CORRECTS THEIR PARENTS. And this applies to ministers and their flocks, as well as to families : and many pious and even eminent ministers have so humoured and indulged their people, as to render them captious, self-conceited, and ready to take offence at every faithful and needful reproof and exhortation. Good Mr. Newton, than whom few stand higher on many grounds, had erred in this respect at Olney to that degree, that he could not preach a plain and practical sermon, without exciting inquiries throughout the town, ‘What has been the matter? Who has been telling Sir something that led to this subject?’ By this and other concurring circumstances, though exemplary, meek, and loving, in the highest degree, he became an Eli at Olney ; and really could not keep his station, having lost almost all his authority and influence. And, when it was known that he was about to go, it seemed the determination of the people to thwart and oppose him in all his plans for their benefit : which made him more disturbed than I ever saw him at any other time.¹

“2. Aversion, carried to extreme, against controversial discussions often makes way for this declension of esteem and usefulness, by opening the door to false teachers, especially antinomians, to corrupt the principles ; or to persons who differ, as dissenters, or antipedobaptists, to unsettle the

¹ Scott’s Life, p. 150, 151, 181. (153, 186.)

minds of the people. Here again, good Mr. Newton used to say, and was admired for saying, 'That it was enough to preach the truth ; for, that being established, error would fall of itself.' Now, if truth were as congenial to the human heart as error, or more so, this might be the case : but who does not see that, if St. Paul had been so averse to all controversy, the false teachers of Galatia and Corinth would have wholly supplanted him, and ruined those flourishing churches ? In consequence, Olney, when Mr. N. left it, swarmed with antinomians ; and, when I about a year after became curate of the parish, most of the professors of the gospel joined the dissenters ; and I had to attempt raising a new congregation, in opposition to the antinomianism and anti-churchism, so to speak, which prevailed. In a population of two thousand five hundred people, often not one hundred got together on a Sunday morning till nearly the end of the service, and half of these from other places. A great majority of Mr. N.'s best people had died before this time : but the antinomians and dissenters had quite undermined his influence, while, labouring assiduously to carry off his people, they met with no opposition.

" 3. On the other hand, a harsh and sharp spirit, and over-eagerness in controversy, or in self-vindication, often carries matters, by the opposite road, to the same point ; by giving opposers the advantage of exclaiming against the spirit manifested by the minister ; and even as disgusting his own people.

" 4. Few pass through life without some false step, or the appearance of evil : and this is far

more noticed, and produces far more effect, in a stated minister, than in one who goes from place to place : and often it imperceptibly gives occasion to many to grow shy of him, and to lend their ears to those who, with voluble tongues, and superficial but specious talent, and with hints of censure, &c. *steal the hearts of the people*, as Absalom stole the hearts of Israel from David, after all his services, and in his old age. I have known many instances of this, in eminent characters ; where, on a general view of things, the alteration has not been perceived, but where it has been painfully felt by those concerned.

“ 5. Even when a man’s faculties and powers of mind do not decline as he grows old, there is a natural tendency in old age to abate vigour and activity, and render a man’s ministrations less fervent and pathetic. If this be not watched and prayed against, it will render his ministry less acceptable ; and likewise give further opportunity to those who are more vigorous and active, in drawing off his people, and counteracting his usefulness ; and this sometimes to an astonishing degree. For, without something very peculiar in a stated minister, which unites the people to him by love, esteem, and veneration, counterbalancing all other things ; men naturally grow tired of hearing the same voice, and are eager after something new, or newer still : and, even where many are steadily attached to their old minister, there always will be more thorny ground, and stony ground, or wayside hearers, who will either prefer a smoother gospel, or go back into the world. *They went out from us, because they were not of*

us. And, where situation, as in many country parishes, prevents an influx of new hearers, and especially when new places are opened in the neighbourhood, by plausible and zealous persons, it cannot but be that a man's congregation must be diminished : but often by this very process the vine is pruned, and the heap of corn winnowed and purified.

“ 6. Ministers are too apt to yield to discouragement in these circumstances, and, instead of being more fervent in prayer, and zealous in labour, and *instant in season, out of season*, and considering what further can be done, they become *heartless* ; their hands hang down ; they go on indeed with their ministrations, but there is less life and vigour in them ; less pains taken privately ; and more of a disposition to seek comfort and amusement in other studies and pursuits. This often exceedingly increases the evil, and gives their rivals every advantage against them. And this is still worse if they take it up as merely their trial, and the appointment of God, and so quiet themselves in a heartless use of ordinary means, instead of being stirred up to extraordinary exertions, and to inquiries, *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me ? What can I do more ? When men slept the enemy sowed the tares. Therefore watch, &c.* Acts xx. 30, 31.

“ These hints may suggest other causes, not before reflected on, to those who are discussing the subject : and the duties, &c. resulting from them, will readily be seen.

“ For myself, I never had any popularity to lose till I came to this village : and then for seve-

ral years I was so attended, and all I said or did was so favourably received, that I used to say, I hope God will give me wisdom and grace to adopt proper measures only; for I seem as if I might do what I pleased. But at length a meeting opened at Haddenham, (as well as others in the neighbouring villages,) with some other changes, so altered the case, that my congregation was so much reduced, and circumstances became so discouraging, that, had I died three or four years ago, mine might have been considered as peculiarly a case in point on the question: and yet, on a full review of the whole, I cannot ascribe it to any false step, either previously or during the secession; though doubtless more simplicity, fervour in prayer, and zeal, might have counteracted it. But my peculiar situation and engagements were such as prevented my doing many things, which in other circumstances might have been attempted; and the numbers who became *dissenters*, and perhaps the greater numbers who became *absenters*, and the deplorable instances of such as grievously disgraced and gave up their profession, depressed me exceedingly. Lately, however, things have taken a more favourable turn. Many have come forth from other places, and several have joined us as communicants; and, though our congregations are much less than once they were, yet probably much more good has been done.

“We ought not therefore to yield to discouragement, but to wait, and hope, and pray, and labour; to endeavour to out-pray, out-preach, and out-live those who are preferred to us; to

expect also, and not to complain, but be thankful, if others *increase* and we *decrease*; and to rejoice that Christ is preached to the ignorant and careless, though we be eclipsed; and to hold fast this maxim, that it is FAR BETTER TO DO A LITTLE GOOD THAN A GREAT DEAL OF MISCHIEF; and that there is *joy in heaven over ONE sinner that repenteth*, though ten thousand continue impenitent.—May God help us to be *faithful unto death*, and give us *the crown of life*, and numbers to be *our joy and crown of rejoicing at last!*

“Your faithful brother in Christ,

“THOMAS SCOTT.”

“Pray for me that I may have patience and fortitude to the end.”

To the Rev. G. Knight, Harwell.

On the Question, What direct Influence have the Doctrines of Predestination, Election, and Final Perseverance on the Character of Believers, when those Doctrines are scripturally stated and received?

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Aston Sandford,
Oct. 16, 1820.

“My many publications, especially my answer to Bishop Tomline, and Account of the Synod of Dort, or, in a shorter abstract, my Sermon on Election and Final Perseverance, might well be pleaded as superseding any necessity for me to give my thoughts on the question to be discussed at your clerical meeting; as also my increasing infirmities might be deemed a sufficient excuse. Yet as you so wish, as it would seem from the

repeated forms of application to me, that I should send my views on the subject in writing, I will try to give a succinct abstract of them.—I must observe that the word *Calvinistical*, as applied to scriptural truth, can only be admitted to avoid circumlocution, and with some latitude. What I consider as the doctrine of scripture relative to these deep points, I will endeavour briefly to state; premising that assuredly *something* is revealed in scripture concerning them; and that therefore it must be assuming ourselves wise above the inspired writers, to suppose the subjects of no importance, and that they had better in no way be brought forward in our public instructions. Whatever is a part of *the whole counsel of God* should be declared, in proper order, connexion, and proportion, as far as we are able.

“ 1. It appears to me then, that the scripture represents man, every man, born of fallen Adam’s race, as wholly corrupt, an apostate, an idolater, (seeking good in the creature, not in the Creator,) a rebel, an enemy to God in his heart; a child of wrath, and in himself a *vessel of wrath fitted for destruction*: that, in whatever peculiar course this depravity may run, it is *by nature* equal in every man: that there is in no man either will or power to return to God, any more than in fallen angels; and that therefore there is nothing, antecedent to *preventing* grace, to co-operate with the influences of the Holy Spirit; but that every thing fights against them. The mind and conscience may be convinced, but the conviction is hated and opposed: *cor repugnat*, as Melancthon says.

“ 2. That salvation is, in all senses and respects,

and in every view of it, altogether of grace; undeserved, contrary to all our deservings: the eternal salvation and felicity of those who in the judgment of God deserve eternal damnation and misery. Submission to the justice of this decision is a very hard thing: it is, I confess, a very *hard saying, who can hear it?*

“3. Salvation may be considered, either in the impetration of it, or in the application and reception of it.

“It is less difficult to procure *assent* at least to the position, that the impetration is all of grace, than that the reception is so. The whole plan of redemption,—*God so loving the world as to give his only begotten Son to be the Saviour of the world, and the propitiation for the sins of the world*; and all things connected with the incarnation, righteousness, atonement, and mediation of Emmanuel; are such as man can have no plausible reason for regarding as in any degree *merited*: though few conceive of them as so absolutely contrary to our merits as they really are. Even the distinguishing favour that *to us is the word of this salvation sent*, and not to numbers in every part of the world, gives less umbrage, when represented as totally independent of our own doings or deservings: but, when the gospel is sent, and fairly proposed, with invitations, exhortations, promises, &c., and one embraces it, while another scornfully or carelessly rejects it; according to my views of scripture, the difference is still wholly of grace, nay an act of *omnipotent* mercy. *You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.* It appears to me that there is no more

moral power in fallen man to welcome the gospel, than to keep the law ; and that, if it had been left wholly, or in any degree, to the mere effect of moral suasion, all things had been made ready in vain : though moral suasion is a proper *means* for us to use in dependence on the blessing of God. Regeneration, a resurrection to spiritual and divine life, a new creation, altogether an act of sovereign and omnipotent grace, precedes all *willingness* to be saved, in the scriptural sense, and in the Lord's way. This is not due to any man, not desired or sought by any ; but neglected, if not contemned, by all while left to themselves. When granted, it is as absolutely free grace, as contrary to deserving, as redemption itself : when not granted, no injustice is done, nothing due is withheld ; nothing but the pride and enmity of the heart hinders the sinner from embracing the gospel. When granted, it shows itself by humble repentance, and works meet for repentance ; by faith, *receiving the truth in love*, and *working by love*,—love of Christ, love of the brethren, good-will to all men, with all its fruits ; by serving and worshipping God *in newness of spirit* and *newness of life*. Then the renewed will and heart *co-operate* with divine grace, and in different degrees men *give diligence to make their calling and election sure*. In proportion as their *calling according to God's purpose* is sure to their own consciences, they may be sure of their *election* ; and, tracing back the effect produced to the source, may say on good grounds, *He hath loved me with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness hath he drawn me* ; and conclude, ' The love divine, which made me thine,

will keep me thine for ever.’¹ But, whether they are able to draw this conclusion or not, still it remains sure in itself; and no notions in the mind about election, &c. give any man a right to consider himself as *elect*, who is not thus *in Christ a new creature*: and, as to *perseverance*, such a man can only persevere in things *not* accompanying salvation.

“*Salvation* then in every sense is wholly *gratuitous*: but *damnation* is always *deserved*. God punishes none above his deserving; his sovereignty is that of infinite wisdom, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy. *He has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*: let who will find fault.—Thus I have viewed the subject for much above forty years: (but I hardly dare avow my sentiments at present:) and I was led to this view, in part, by a full conviction that, while some individuals of my acquaintance were awfully cut off in their sins, I was brought to welcome and rejoice in God’s salvation; and that the reverse might justly have taken place.

“Suppose then these views, not floating as notions in the head, but become inward and deeply wrought convictions in the heart, and principles of conduct, and measures of judgment in all things; it appears to me that humiliation before God must bear a full proportion to the measure in which they prevail: all boasting and self-preference must be excluded; all disposition to trust in ourselves and despise others, to lean to our own understanding, to trust in our own hearts, &c. Calvinists, as

¹ C. Wesley.

well as others, may be proud of their notions and supposed privileges, and we all have too much, far too much, of this remaining ; but the inward, habitual, experimental influence of these principles must humble, and keep humble, as far as it prevails. Humility before God, in proportion as it becomes deeper and deeper, must produce greater patience, resignation, contentment, thankfulness, in all their varied exercises.—The views I have stated seem especially those of fervent earnest prayer, thanksgiving, and adoration ; and one can hardly conceive of the worshippers of heaven having any other views, while they ascribe *salvation to our God, that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever.*—Deep humility before God always influences to proportionable meekness, forbearance, forgiveness towards men, even those who most injure us, or are most opposed to us : and I must think, if we were all more deeply grounded in the principles above stated, a degree of meekness and mutual love would follow, of which we have at present little conception.

“ As God accomplishes his purposes by means and instruments, which we may know in our own case, these views present no impediment to our using all proper means for the good of others also : while they not only produce the conviction, that the same rich grace and omnipotent energy, by which God saved us, would suffice for the conversion and salvation of any of those whom we address ; but also lead directly to a simple and entire dependence on that omnipotent and most rich grace for success, while we are prepared to give the whole glory to God, when our endeavours are

prospered. They stimulate to exertions like Paul's : and to his acknowledgment, *Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me* ; to contributions after the manner of David ; and to confessions, *Who am I, O Lord, that I should be able to give thus willingly after this sort ? Of thine own have I given thee.*—On the other hand, as in every thing they lead us to expect success only of God's free mercy and powerful grace, they restrict us to such means alone as we may scripturally expect, and confidently pray, that God will bless : not doing evil that good may come.—They are also, and I find them such, the grand support and cordial of the soul under temptations, conflicts, sufferings ; nay in the midst of doubts and fears, as well as when assured that we *have passed from death unto life.*

Determined to save

He watch'd o'er my path,

When Satan's blind slave,

I sported with death ;

And can he have taught me

To trust in his name,

And thus far have brought me,

To put me to shame ?

It is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed. Whether in the ark or not, there is an ark : I am in the land of hope, and prayer, and mercy.—*Whom he will he hardeneth.* He has not hardened me. I am not among scoffers, blasphemers, infidels, Socinians, Pharisees, antinomians, Gallios. *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.*—Thus I would plead in the darkest hours. In brighter times, while all the glory of the past is unreservedly given to God,

I am enabled to trust him *to perfect what concerneth me*. But, were my confidence to rest on any thing in myself, I am so conscious how little my heart and resolution can be depended on, that I should *despair*, or at least *despond*.

“I must also add, that those very views, or principles, lie at the bottom of all proper exertions, and hope of success in exertions, to propagate Christianity in the world. God’s omnipotent grace, his purposes, his predictions, alone give just ground of confidence in attempting to surmount the otherwise insuperable difficulties in the way. In short these views cause the gospel to appear in its full glory, while all other views in a measure seem to darken that glory. They secure all the honour to God, and cherish all right principles and feelings in our hearts, towards him, our brethren, and all men.

“This is an imperfect view of my sentiments on the subject.—My kind regards to Mrs. Knight. God bless you and all your’s, and our assembled brethren. Pray for me, especially for faith, patience, and fortitude ; for I am weak.

“Your’s faithfully,

“THOS. SCOTT.”

XIII.

ON MATTHEW XIII. 28.

“ An enemy hath done this.”

“ IN lately reading the parable of the tares of the field, the expression, *An enemy hath done this*, suggested to me the following general observation, That Christianity is answerable only for its own genuine effects, and not for any thing which men, called Christians, have done of another or contrary nature : I sowed good seed in my field ; but, as to tares, *an enemy hath done this*.

“ When our Saviour had cast out the legion, restored the frantic demoniac to his right mind, brought him to sit at his feet, and sent him to tell his countrymen what the Lord had done for him ; it should seem that the Gadarenes overlooked all this important good ; and thought of little but what the devils (by the *permission*, indeed, of Christ,) had done in destroying the swine. And so, charging the benevolent Jesus with the loss of their property, which he, for wise reasons, did not see good by his omnipotence to prevent ; they refused both his gracious assistance for the cure of their sick, and his invaluable instructions for the salvation of their souls. *An enemy had done this* : and they were so alarmed and prejudiced

that they desired the best friend, that ever set foot in their country, to depart out of their coasts; though the recovered demoniac was an unexceptionable witness to his love, as well as his power.

"It appears to me, that modern infidels and sceptics, of various kinds, have trodden in the steps of these Gadarenes; or rather far outgone them. During eighteen centuries immense multitudes, in regions most remote from each other, have, by the *genuine efficacy* of Christianity, been *turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven*: they have been taught to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*: they have *repented and done works meet for repentance*: they have been *harmless and blameless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of crooked and perverse nations, shining among them as lights in the world*: they have extorted even from their enemies the most unequivocal acknowledgements of their temperance, equity, truth, and love: they have, by their example covered their calumniators with shame, and disarmed numbers of their persecutors: they have been indeed *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people*: yet they have confessed, without exception, that they came far short of that excellence to which their principles, maxims, motives, and example, called them. Nay it has often been proved unanswerably, that, if Christianity were universally received as the principle and rule of men's conduct, it must form the human race to such piety, justice, temperance, faithfulness, and mercy, that wars,

massacres, murders, slavery, oppression, licentiousness, and every other evil that disturbs and plagues the world would cease, and peace and love, with all *the fruits of righteousness*, must fill the earth. Let all men *repent and believe the gospel*; let them act from its principles, and according to its instructions; let them obey the precepts of Christ, and imitate his example; let them all be Christians indeed, and consistent Christians: and I appeal to every man's understanding and conscience, what sort of rulers, and subjects, and relations, and friends they would be, and what the state of the world would become.—The Christian church, for a short time after the day of pentecost, when *great grace was on them all*, showed us a specimen; and very many millions in succeeding ages have in some good measure answered to it: and numbers even now on earth so far resemble them, that, if whole countries, if the whole earth, were filled with such characters, the beneficial consequences would baffle calculation, and even exceed all that we can at present so much as imagine. Now this is the genuine tendency and effect of Christianity, and the honour of it belongs to her exclusively: whereas, whatever contradicts her principles, her precepts, or the example of her founder, is tares sown by the enemy. He indeed took *occasion* from the good seed being sown, to cast in his tares: but the parable itself is a prophecy; and Christ and his apostles foretold, in very many places, what mischief the wicked heart of man, and the influence of evil spirits, would take occasion from Christianity to perpetrate: and so the event turns to us for a testimony. But they

have also cautioned us against charging the blame on the gospel; for *an enemy hath done it*.

"The modern opposers, however, of our holy religion either *forget*, or are *willingly ignorant of*, the immense effects of the most excellent kind which history records as produced by Christianity, and the still more extensive good which it is calculated to produce, when more generally received in its purity; and they dwell with triumph on what *the enemy* has done, as if Christ had done it, or Christianity had commanded it. But surely Christianity is not answerable for the mischiefs which heresy, superstition, and enthusiasm have done, or for the crimes of vile hypocrites, whom she classes with infidels.—Can Christianity be answerable for what Antichrist has done, according to the prophecies of the primitive preachers of the gospel? Does Christianity command frauds, seditions, massacres, persecutions, and holy (or rather unholy) wars? Does she authorize her ministers to trample on the necks of kings; or kings to shed the blood of their subjects? Does she even inculcate the *odium theologicum*, of which so much is spoken, as if inseparable from religion? Do her principles lead to any of these evils? Nay do not her principles, and precepts, and approved examples most directly oppose, discountenance, and forbid in the severest manner, and under the most dreadful penalties, every approach to these evils? Are not all these the offspring of that pride, ambition, envy, malice, rapacity, and enmity to God and man, which constitute *the works of the devil*, that Christ came *to destroy*? Let such men, as perpetrate these crimes under the cloke of religion,

produce their commission and instructions from the New Testament. Let those, who charge their crimes on the gospel, show what principle of the gospel tends to produce them, what precepts require them. Till then it is a sufficient answer to say, *An enemy hath done this*. Even the controversies among Christians, especially when managed with heat and acrimony, are directly contrary to the spirit and precepts of Christianity: and the divisions of the church arise from the want of more knowledge, humility, and love among Christians, and are opposite to the spirit and precepts of the gospel.

"It appears to me, that attempts to distinguish Christianity, as exhibited pure and complete in the scriptures, from every spurious, mutilated, and corrupted species of religion; to show the nature and tendency of the former, and of the latter; what Christ hath done, and what *an enemy hath done*, are of the most essential service to the common cause; and even a matter of the last importance in the argument of Christians against infidels and sceptics."

XIV.

EXTRACTS

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED WORK.

IN the Life of my father I expressed the opinion, that he had left no further writings behind him which could properly be given to the public, except it were additional letters to his friends. A more careful examination induces me so far to modify this opinion, as to except from it, in addition to the papers contained in the preceding pages, pretty copious *extracts*, which I am here about to present to the reader, from one more regular composition.

The work intended is, I conceive, to be referred to the year 1783 or 1784; or at least to the period between the publication of the Force of Truth, in 1779, and that of the Discourse on Repentance, in 1785. It consists of one hundred and thirty-four folio pages, written in a clear bold hand. It displays great knowledge of divinity, much observation of the religious world, a keen detection of errors and their tendencies, with all the vigour, acuteness, and comprehensiveness which subsequently distinguished the author. It bears also the same highly practical, and yet strongly evan-

gelical, character,¹ which marked his later writings. Indeed the observation which suggested itself on the perusal of the manuscript was, that his handwriting and his religious sentiments appeared to have continued alike unchanged throughout the whole of his career. Perhaps it is a little more systematical, deduces rather more in the way of *inference* from scriptural principles, and is rather less cautious in its language, than a later production would have been: but these are nearly all the differences that would be found in it. In short, that "early maturity," which has been attributed to the writer's sentiments,² is eminently visible in every part of it.

Two considerations are sufficiently decisive against publishing it as a distinct work: first, that it is left imperfect, having never been brought to a conclusion: and, secondly, that, though originally designed for publication, the author himself suffered it to lie by him unpublished for almost forty years. What were his reasons for thus abandoning his design I do not remember to have heard him state: but I should not be surprised if they arose from an apprehension that he had animadverted more freely, than would be borne with in one of his standing, on certain views of religion then current in many quarters. A reason of this sort, it is obvious, must now have lost its force: and, though as a whole the work is not in a state for the public eye, many parts of it, with a general

¹ Life, p. 666, 668. (685, 687.)

² Commemoration by the Church Missionary Committee: Life, p. 317. (325.)

analysis of its contents, to connect those parts together, may, I trust, be advantageously given. And this is what I at present propose. I shall only further premise, that nothing will be here inserted from the manuscript, which I do not feel confident would have had the author's approbation to the last, and have coincided with his latest sentiments: it must however be borne in mind, that, as he in one place observes, "it is not his design to attempt a laboured *proof* of the various heads of doctrine" which are introduced, but only to state them in order to a further purpose.

The general title of the work is, "Evangelical Fruitfulness:" but a more adequate idea of its purport will be conveyed by the following expansion of the title: "Being an attempt to describe the true nature of Christianity; in two Parts, one Doctrinal, the other Practical." The reader may find a good preparative for many of the sentiments which distinguish it, in the letters to the Rev. J. Mayor and the Rev. G. More, which are published in the eighth chapter of the author's Life, and which were written in the years 1783, 1784, 1785. Indeed there is a passage in a letter to the latter correspondent, dated Olney, April 14, 1784, which furnishes so orderly an abstract of the work before us, as to afford a strong argument that the writer was either at that time employed on it, or had but very recently dismissed it from his hands. "The truth of the matter," he there says, "is, upon mature deliberation I am convinced that the preaching of the present day is not practical enough, or sufficiently *distinguishing* between true and false experience. I therefore speak more fully than

most do of the moral character of the Deity: of the excellency, glory, and loveliness of that character as described in the word of God. From this I deduce the reasonableness and excellency of the holy law of God; which I endeavour fully to open in its extensive requirements. Thence follows man's obligation to love God, both on account of his infinite loveliness, and of our natural relations and obligations to him. Then I demonstrate the evil of sin, as apostacy from this lovely and glorious God and king, and transgression of his perfect law. Thence I show the justice of God in the infinite, the eternal punishment of sinners; it being necessary that God should mark his hatred of this hateful thing, magnify his holy law, and show his justice, that he might appear glorious in the eyes of all for ever, but rebels.—Thus I suppose I *dig deep* to lay the foundation for the gospel of free grace: the necessity, nature, and glory of the vicarious obedience and sufferings of Emmanuel; the sufficiency of his one sacrifice; and his ability and willingness to save to the uttermost all that come. Thence I show that all who will *may* come, and *ought* to come, and that all sin atrociously in *not* coming: that, however, it is in no natural man's heart to come, because each man is proud, selfish, worldly, and carnal: therefore all are without excuse. But a God of sovereign grace, having mercy on whom he will, according to his own purpose makes some willing, by regeneration. This changes the prevailing bent of the heart; and henceforth the man is not only humbly willing to be justified by faith, and saved by grace; but hates and repents of sin, loves God's

law, loves holiness, and leads a holy life, sincerely, progressively, though imperfectly—daily receiving from Christ grace so to do; and that all experience which has not this effect is false. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.*"¹

PART I.

THE DIVINE CHARACTER.

THE first, or doctrinal part of the work commences thus: "All religion presupposes the existence of some superior Power, who notices human affairs, and is able and willing to reward those who please him, and to punish those who offend him. An assured belief of this fundamental truth produces an earnestness in religion of *some* sort.—But *true* religion further presupposes an acquaintance with the perfections of this superior Power: otherwise we may zealously, indeed, but ignorantly worship an unknown God; and our religious earnestness may and will be found among our greatest sins. But an assured belief that there is a God of such perfections, and of such a character as the Bible represents, will produce earnestness in pure and undefiled religion, honourable and acceptable to the Lord, and profitable to men. This knowledge of God will mightily assist us in understanding what that worship and service are, which he must require and approve, and will dis-

¹ Life, p. 208, 209. (213, 214.)

cover to us the reasonableness and excellency thereof.

“ The holy scriptures therefore, being a revelation of God to man, abound in declarations of his character and perfections. Besides multitudes of detached instructions on this point, dispersed throughout the Bible, that which forms its grand subject, even redemption by the death of the Son of God, is no other than a revelation of *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. Here all the divine perfections are harmoniously displayed in all their glory. All the lines meet in this centre ; and he, who well understands this doctrine, exactly in proportion well understands the character of God : nor can he remain ignorant of that worship and service which God requires ; or fail of perceiving how reasonable and excellent it is. Indeed the conversion of a sinner consists in giving him a spiritual perception of this divine glory ; which lays a foundation for every holy disposition, and all holy practice. *God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*¹ The revelation was before made in the word ; but pride, and prejudice, and *the God of this world, blinded our minds*, and we saw not its glory : but now, these hindrances being removed by the Spirit of God, we see, and admire, and love what we behold.”

The principal divine perfections are then enumerated, particularly the holiness of God, which

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 3.

“is a *law unto himself* that he cannot transgress,” rendering it “eternally impossible that he should do any wrong, or allow any other to do it:” and it is then added: “These are the general outlines of the divine character, the knowledge of which I apprehend to be fundamental to all true religion: and I would wish seriously to recommend it to all who may peruse this treatise, in reading the sacred scriptures, especially the Psalms, and the prophetical books, to observe carefully how very much is said concerning the character of God, particularly his holiness. The more I consider the scriptures with express reference to this subject, the more I am convinced of the importance of this knowledge of God in all true religion, doctrinal, practical, and experimental; and the more doth it endear the Bible to me, as fully revealing and communicating this knowledge, which was no otherwise attainable by fallen man.

“And now,” the author goes on to ask, “must it not, even from this imperfect sketch, needs appear, that this character of God is infinitely lovely, and would certainly be admired and loved, as such, by all rational creatures, who had the opportunity of being acquainted with it, were not their hearts evil and their judgments perverted?”

CREATION.

“Now let us consider this eternally glorious God, moved by his own goodness, creating the world, and, amongst the other productions of his

almighty power and wisdom, forming rational agents, capable of knowing good from evil, and of choosing the one and refusing the other, bearing his holy image, without the least bias to moral evil, but entirely, though not immutably, disposed to imitate the divine holiness ; and formed capable of immortality and blessedness."

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AND LAW.

"LET us consider Jehovah, conscious of his undoubted right to sovereign authority, and that he alone is capable of exercising it, taking the throne as monarch of the universe. As sovereign he gives a law to his subjects : as infinitely wise and holy, and perfectly acquainted with his own rights, with what is fit and right in the nature of things, with the capacities of his creatures, with their relations and obligations to him and to one another, and with the glory and stability of his throne, and the good of his universal kingdom through eternal ages, his law must needs be perfect ; *holy, and just, and good.*—The sum and substance of this law is love. All its precepts are included in, and may be referred to the two great commandments, *to love God* (who is infinitely lovely, and to whom we owe our all,) *with all our heart*, and *to love our neighbour* (who is our equal, and whose happiness is of just as much consequence as our own,) *as we love ourselves*, with equal estimation and benevolence. More than this the perfect law of God doth not require : less than this cannot be reasonable and equitable ;

and therefore God cannot require less. As a king who is indeed the father of his people he says to them, Love me, and love one another, and be happy.

“ Lay these things together, and may we not, ought we not, nay, if nothing were wrong within, *should* we not, unanimously and exultingly sing, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice ?*”

EVIL OF SIN, AND FALL OF MAN.

“ BUT, the more undoubted the title which any prince has to the throne ; the greater the obligations of his subjects to him ; the more excellent his character, for wisdom, justice, and goodness ; the more reasonable and equitable his laws ; the more impartially they are executed ; and the greater the happiness which his loyal subjects enjoy under him ; the more execrable is the wretch, who, out of pride, ambition, envy, or resentment, excites rebellion in the kingdom, aims to overturn such a government, to dethrone such a king, and to ruin the happiness of such a nation. By this plain rule of judgment, rebellion in any of God’s subjects must, in every point in which we can view it, appear inconceivably evil. Not only does language fail in describing, but imagination must be incapable of conceiving the monstrous baseness of him, who, receiving his being and all he enjoys from God ; being the absolute property of his maker, and his rightful subject ; ungratefully rebels against such a benefactor, breaks such a law, and, as far as in him lies, attempts to over-

turn such a throne, and to ruin the happiness of the world. And all this is implied in sin."

Hence the writer proceeds to vindicate that everlasting punishment which God has denounced against sin: and thence to consider the introduction of evil by the fall of angels and of man.

"The transaction with Adam," as the representative of all the human race, he observes, "is not only expressly mentioned in many places of scripture literally interpreted, but is every where implied, and forms, so to speak, the master key by which to open all the principal obscurities in the book of God, and all the otherwise unaccountable appearances which strike us, when we consider what is going forward in the world." And he adds: "Whatever difficulties our narrow views, and perverted judgments, and selfishness in a case in which we are in the event such sufferers, may find in considering this subject, and reconciling it to the divine perfections; without all doubt it did and doth appear to all holy beings holy, and just, and good. Evidently it did and still doth appear so to God; or he would never have proposed it, or dealt with man according to it: for, *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* Nor can we reasonably question that it appeared thus to Adam; or he would have humbly objected to it. Nor is there more reason to doubt that it appeared so to the holy angels: for they are ever represented as adoring the holiness of God, as displayed in his dealings with mankind. And finally holy men of old, as speaking under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, while they record,

acknowledge, and mourn over, or comment upon this transaction, ever with harmonious voice declare, that God is *righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*"

Again : "*Known unto God are all his works from before the foundation of the world :* and he not only foresaw, but in his infinite wisdom provided for this event. Far be it from us to imagine that the holy God compelled, enticed, or in any degree influenced his creatures to sin, or rendered it necessary or unavoidable to them : on the contrary, having formed them for ever capable of avoiding it, and having given them every encouragement and incitement to obedience, he let them know his infinite hatred of sin, and determination to punish it with the utmost severity, and warned them with all solemnity against it. But he did not deem himself bound in justice to prevent, by an exertion of almighty power, that fall which, unless they were wanting to themselves, they were able to avoid. He foresaw that, left to themselves, they might, yea *would* fall ; and for wise reasons he chose thus to leave them, knowing that he might justly do so : and then he embraced the occasion, thus offered by their wilful aggravated rebellion, to manifest and glorify his infinite mercy, (an attribute of his character which had never before been displayed,) in harmony with his other perfections, in the work of redemption.

" If man be acknowledged to be a fallen apostate creature, none of the rest can be denied without palpable blasphemy. God doubtless foresaw that man would fall, if left to himself : cer-

tainly he could have prevented it by an exertion of almighty power : but he did not. Had justice required it, assuredly he would. Had it not been the wisest and best, all things considered, he would never have permitted sin. The thing proves itself. The existence of sin demonstrates that it was just and wise in God to permit it : and they argue against self-evidence, who, by objecting to this part of the divine providence and government, endeavour to prejudice men's minds against those doctrines, which presuppose what has been here delivered. If God could not consistently with justice and wisdom leave his rational creatures to themselves, when he foresaw that they would sin if thus left, he must either be divested of omniscience, or forbidden to manifest either his justice in punishing sin, or his mercy in pardoning it : and thus his giving a law and governing the world come to nothing ; for, if any break the law, the blame is cast on God who permits it ! Such bold objectors are best answered by the apostle : *Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God ?*"

The writer now proceeds to the doctrine of the Trinity, and of redemption.

REDEMPTION DESIGNED TO MAGNIFY THE LAW.

“ MAN'S disobedience dishonoured and reflected on the precepts of God's holy law, as if it had not been equitable, reasonable, or necessary ; as if it were needlessly strict and rigorous ; commanded things incompatible with the happiness of those

who were subject to it, and forbad them enjoyments which would have added to their real and true felicity : in fine, as if the great lawgiver had been defective either in wisdom, or in love to his subjects. This is evidently implied in transgression ; for why else break a law which is, in perfect wisdom and benevolence, promulgated for our good ?.....

“The various objections which are so commonly made against one or another precept of the law, and against its strictness and spirituality, together with the multiplied schemes continually framed by antinomians, neonomians, and others, for abrogating, lowering, altering the law of God ; and the harsh language which many use concerning it ; too plainly prove the opinion which sinners entertain of it : how glad they would be to be rid of it : how they hate it with a perfect hatred : and consequently how necessary it was that God, as the great Governor of the world, should, in his plan for the salvation of sinners, counteract this disposition, and *magnify the law, and make it honourable.*

“This the Son of God hath effectually done by his obedience to the law in our nature. The dignity of his person, *God with us* ; the voluntariness of his obedience—he being under no obligation to obey in this our world for so many years ; the difficult circumstances in which his obedience was performed—even in the midst of all those *external* obstacles, temptations, and sufferings which sin has placed in our way, but with which no holy being, save Jesus Christ, ever struggled in obeying ; the perfection of his obedience in every point ;

the cheerfulness with which he undertook, and persevered in, and perfected his work—uniformly declaring that he *delighted* to obey—that *the law was in his heart*—and that it was *his meat to do the will of God, and to finish his work*: all conspired to put unspeakable honour on God's law, in the view of the whole intelligent creation, even more than the united obedience of all creatures could have done. While the Father, in not making any abatements, or relaxing in one single point, on account of his infinite love to his only begotten Son, or for his personal worth and dignity, more convincingly demonstrated his regard to the honour of his law, and his unalterable judgment of its transcendent excellency, than can be conceived to be in any other way possible.

“But, though the first Adam, as surety for his posterity, who could have no guilt to answer for previously to *his* transgression, had only active obedience to perform; yet the second Adam, as surety for *sinners*, must also be *obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*: that is, the penalty, as well as the precept of the law must be honoured.—Nothing can be more obvious than this provision. This apostate world resounds from one end to another with clamours against this part of God's word. The very mention of eternal damnation is reprobated as horrible. Tyranny, cruelty, and such like terms are applied by apostate rebels to the righteous denunciations of their offended sovereign: for the self-same reason that traitors and robbers execrate those *cruel* laws which condemn them to death. And, if any man, out of zeal for his Maker's honour, and benevolent com-

passion for his fellow sinners, venture in plain terms to tell them their guilt and danger, he immediately becomes the object of their scorn and execration. In short, this thought, that the curse of the law is needlessly severe, is congenial to the human heart.

“But, if such be indeed the sanction of the divine law ; if eternal damnation be denounced against all transgressors ; and if God’s subjects, so far from submitting to his righteousness in this particular, openly quarrel with it, and scruple not to charge him with tyranny and cruelty ; it surely must be highly necessary that, in exercising mercy for the pardon and salvation of sinners, he should adopt some decisive measure for vindicating his own honour, and convincing the world of his justice ; lest it should seem as if he tacitly acknowledged himself wrong, and was making them an amends.

“For this end the divine surety was *made a curse for us*, when he *redeemed us from the curse of the law*.....

“Let us consider the whole rational creation, every intelligence that ever was, or ever shall be created, receiving information of this event—that, when God of his most rich mercy to sinful men, whom he judged righteously deserving of eternal damnation, purposed to spare, forgive, and save them ; in order that none might think worse of his law, or better of sin, or that he would not punish sin as the law denounced, because it would have been too severe to do it ; he in their stead punished his only-begotten Son, and spared him not, but caused the sword of justice to awake

against him and smite him : let them be informed of this, (as doubtless they will be,) and will they not see and acknowledge that God's hatred of sin, and determination to punish it inflexibly and impartially, are more displayed in this transaction than in not sparing the angels that sinned, or even in eternally punishing every individual transgressor?

“ Let but the divine dignity of the Son of God ; the infinite love of the eternal Father to him ; the excellence and glory of his character ; the perfection and willingness of his obedience ; and the intenseness and complication of his sufferings, from the contempt and cruelty of man, the temptations of the devil, and those horrors, with which doubtless the combined forces of hell in that hour assaulted his soul : let his sufferings in body and mind, by *the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, though by the *wicked hands* of men, be well considered : then contemplate the eternal Father, *not sparing*, but *delighting to bruise* his well-beloved Son—to pound him as in a mortar, the original word implies : then remember that he was *wounded for our transgressions, was bruised for our iniquities* ; that *the chastisement of our peace was upon him*, and that *with his stripes we are healed* ; that *all we like sheep had gone astray, and the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all* : and then let us determine whether this was not a more evident attestation of his infinite hatred of sin, and of his absolute approbation of the curse of the law, as righteous and reasonable, than if he had without mercy inflicted it upon us all.

“ The event plainly evinces that the eternal

misery of sinners is not an act of arbitrary choice in God ; that he does not delight in their death ; but that it has its foundation in the nature and reason of things ; and must be so, if God be perfect, if he judge of things as they really are, proportion his love or hatred to the good or evil he sees in them, and order his conduct accordingly. For, when his infinite love prevailed in showing mercy to sinful men, his infinite hatred of sin, and regard to justice, influenced him to give his only Son to be the propitiation for their sins ; and, when he would spare them, he would not spare him.

“Nor doth the conduct of the divine Mediator less unequivocally proclaim the same truths. Though he was so far from having merited any punishment, that he had more honoured the law of God than all creatures can ever do, and therefore was on his own account no way liable to death, which is *the wages of sin* ; having also a body and soul properly his own, and at his own disposal ; yet most willingly and cheerfully did he give up both body and soul a sacrifice for sin ; and without one murmur or complaint, without any reluctancy or impatience, bore all that pain, anguish, contempt, horror, wrath, and vengeance which sin had merited—the infinity of his person fully compensating the temporary duration of his sufferings. The language of this conduct of the Son of God is most plainly this : ‘ I delight in the whole law : that dreadful penalty which the law denounces against every transgressor, and which excites such rancorous enmity in the hearts of sinners, and causes such blasphemous clamours

against the divine administration, I cordially approve. Though my heart is filled with immense compassion and tenderest love for sinners, and is fixed in the gracious purpose of effecting their salvation, yet do I declare sin to be that evil thing which this awful sentence implies. I will vindicate with my dying lips the righteousness of God therein : and, rather than the sanction of the law should be in the least dishonoured through the remission of sin, and the exemption of transgressors from the curse, I myself will be made a curse, and thus in their stead suffer the deserved vengeance ; that all the universe to all eternity may see and know, that I deem every sinner deserving of eternal misery ; that God may be glorious in his impartial justice, and rich abounding mercy.'

PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL—INVITATIONS.

“AND now, all that was requisite having been done to manifest God's awful hatred of sin, and inflexible justice in punishing it, for the instruction of all his subjects in this part of his character to all eternity ; every impediment being thus removed, the gracious propensity of the divine nature, which is LOVE, and which induced him to take these previous steps, that he might honourably show mercy, breaks forth into exercise. . . . All things being now ready, the servants are sent forth to invite the guests. Ministers commissioned, and qualified from the fulness that is in Christ, are sent into all the world, to preach the gospel to every creature ; and, having informed them of the

suitable and sufficient preparation made in and by the Son of God, to invite them to return to God through Christ by faith, that they may receive pardon, righteousness, and eternal life. These invitations are to be made as unlimited as possible ; to *every creature* ; to *the chief of sinners*, and the meanest of sinners. *Let him that is athirst come, and WHOSOEVER WILL let him take of the water of life freely.* They are to be made as free and unencumbered as possible ; *without money and without price.* The waters of salvation flow in rich abundance, and the poorest are welcome to as much as they want. Nothing is required as price, or even as a qualification or condition, but merely to come to the waters and draw.—Yet further, the invitations are to be as *pressing* as possible. The servants are to *compel* men to come in ; not by severities, but by affectionate intreaties, earnest expostulations, solemn warnings, repeated invitations, and every argument which has a tendency to convince the judgment or persuade the heart. Yea, they are even to represent God himself as *BESEECHING them* by his ambassadors *to be reconciled unto him* ; as *COMMANDING all men every where to repent*, and believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. They are to assure them that the Lord Jesus *will cast out none that come* ; but hath engaged his word to give all spiritual blessings to all, without exception, who sincerely ask for them : closing with this solemn declaration, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

“Now we may be quite sure that the holy God, whose character has been spoken of, is perfectly

sincere in this, and in good earnest means what he says. A contrary supposition would be highly derogatory to the moral excellency of the divine character. Many preachers however, not perceiving the consistency of such invitations, sincerely made, with some other parts of their scheme; *leaning to their own understanding*, and paying more regard to human reasonings than to the oracles of God; omit this most important part of their ministry—to the inconceivable hurt of true religion.

EFFECT OF UNLIMITED OFFERS—MAN'S ENMITY
TO THE GOSPEL.

“BUT may not this matter be made clear and consistent in the following manner? That God who foresaw that even holy creatures left to themselves, and not upheld by him, might and would change, and sin, foresaw likewise that it would not be in the heart of *fallen* creatures to repent, or turn to God, or believe such truths as are contained in the gospel: that their self-admiring, self-excusing, carnal hearts would take fire at such affronting treatment as being charged with rebellion and enmity against him, and being righteously condemned to everlasting misery: that not only would *the preaching of the cross be to them foolishness*, and so excite their contempt; but that it would likewise be considered as an unjust attack upon their characters, and so excite their indignation and resentment. He foresaw that the same enmity against him, which disposed all men to

break and quarrel with the law, would dispose all men to despise and quarrel with the gospel, as intended to put honour on the law. He knew what was in their hearts : but he determined that they and others should know it too, *that every mouth might be stopped* ; that the whole rational creation might witness the malignant nature and effects of sin, and the irreconcilable enmity of a sinner's heart to the glory of God : that they might adore his righteousness in the condemnation of the impenitent, and his triumphant mercy in the salvation of his people :—that *the loftiness of man might be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man might be made low, and the Lord alone be exalted in that day*. Therefore shall salvation be freely offered to all, without exception, who hear the gospel : thus all who are willing to accept it in God's way are assured of a cordial welcome, and those who remain unwilling, are shown to be without excuse—their destruction is of themselves. Men would persuade others, and even themselves, that they are very willing, and desirous of being reconciled unto God, if he be but willing ; and that, if the reconciliation do not actually take place, the fault will not be their's. But now, when God reveals himself as in *Christ reconciling the world unto himself*, and most sincerely invites them, yea, most graciously *beseeches* them to be reconciled, the event demonstrates their utter unwillingness, and that, whatever excuses they may make, they perish for this only reason, that they *WILL not come unto Christ that they might have life*.

DISTINGUISHING GRACE.

“ But the Lord knew that, left to themselves, none would be thus willing; and therefore he saw the whole human race as having, by breaking his law, become his enemies, and, by their universal disposition to despise and hate the gospel, (as the reception it has always met with abundantly manifests,) persisting in that enmity: and he did not judge himself in any way bound to do more for them. No one of them has any thing to urge why the law should not take its course, and sentence be executed.

“ But, though all might have been left to perish, consistently with perfect justice, a God of love will not be disappointed of the ineffable joy and glory of showing mercy. Therefore, as sovereign, he determines, as it seems best to his infinite wisdom, without assigning his reasons to us, *to have mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will*, among this justly lost and condemned race, *he hardeneth*. (Rom. ix. 18.)— Nothing is wanting to the salvation of any or every one but *a willing mind*: and they, who live and die persisting in their *unwillingness* to be saved in God’s way, will never dare at God’s tribunal to impeach his conduct for not saving them in their own way; or for not *making them willing*, when they were obstinately set against it.

“ But, though God does not esteem this a debt which he owes to any of his enemies, yet he judges that he may confer it as a rich favour on any one,

or on any number that he pleases. And this he actually does : he regenerates one, and not another : one thus becomes *willing*, the other remains still *unwilling*.

“ And indeed, if men be all of one nature, and if all do not go to one place : if at the general judgment some shall be found *meet for the inheritance of the saints in light*, as *vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory* ; and others shall be found justly deserving of everlasting punishment, and *vessels of wrath fitted for destruction* : and if, as the scripture declares, it is God that maketh one man *to differ* from another, in a way that is good ; and if this difference be made by a work which the only wise God judges to be properly denominated *a new creation, regeneration, a resurrection from the dead* : if some are made thus to differ from their former selves, as much as from others, and the rest remain as they were ; and if all their future conduct which distinguishes them from the ungodly, as God’s servants, and holy persons, springs from this original change of their hearts : then the view of things before given is evidently just, and eminently important—namely, that a righteous and merciful, a wise and sovereign God judged men in general, and every one of them, to be so inexcusable in their rebellion, and obstinate in their enmity, that, left to themselves, they would hate and despise his gospel, as universally as they had broken and quarrelled with his law ; that therefore he should be not only fully justified, but greatly glorified in leaving any or all of them to perish in their rebellion ; and, at the same time, that he had a full right to select

whom he would as objects of his most free mercy, and monuments of the power of his grace, without any injury to the rest; and by a new creation to overcome their obstinacy, and make them willing to accept his gracious invitations.

ELECTION.

“AND now, if in fact God does regenerate one, and leave another unregenerate, and thus makes one to differ from another, it is plain he does it *intentionally*; that is, he intended to do it before he actually performed it: and, if it be just and right in God actually to do this work for one and not for another, it could not be unjust or wrong to *intend* to do it—unless it can be wrong to intend to do right: and, if God might justly intend to make this difference half an hour before he made it, he might with equal justice, in his foreknowledge, intend to make it from before the foundation of the world: and this is all which I suppose the scriptures to mean by election. Nor can any thing be objected against this view of this obnoxious doctrine, which does not equally go to deny the justice of God in regenerating one and not another: that is to say, stripped of all its false colourings, to deny to God, the sovereign of the world, that right which each of his subjects claims to himself, *to do what he will with his own*. If any man suppose that God is indebted to him, let him make out his claim, and it shall assuredly be paid him: but, if God owes us nothing, but we have ungratefully rebelled against him to

whom we owe our all; and, when invited and intreated, refuse to be reconciled in his way, or unless he excuses us, and blames himself and his law, to humour our pride and self-love; what awful impiety is it to charge him with partiality and tyranny because he does what he will with his own, and has mercy on whom he will, and on them only!

“In short this (I trust scriptural) view of this much disputed, but little understood doctrine, stamps the deepest stigma on human nature, exhibiting men as universally, in their carnal minds, *enmity against God* to such a degree that nothing but Almighty power could make them willing to be reconciled: and therefore no wonder that man’s proud self-admiring heart rages even to blasphemy against it.—But at the same time it places the triumphant love and mercy of God in the most glorious and stupendous light; as foreseeing all these things, and yet determining to give his own Son to bleed and die for such enemies; and also by his efficacious grace to overcome the obstinacy of numberless millions, and, making them *willing in the day of his power*, to form them *a people for himself to show forth his praise*.”

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

“HITHERTO we have considered the love of God the Father in sending his only Son into the world, and the love of God the Son in giving himself for our redemption; but the love of God the Holy

Ghost must also be manifested, and glorified in this great work. This then is his work of condescending, compassionate, and generous love,—to apply to our poor, guilty, polluted souls, what the Son of God purchased on the cross; to pour new light into our darkened understandings; to implant a new capacity of perceiving and delighting in spiritual excellency; to remove those hindrances which Satan, by means of our pride, prejudices, and love of the world had thrown in the way; and thus to enable us to see things as they really are, or as God sees them; to judge of them as he judges; and thus to influence our wills to choose the good and refuse the evil; and so to give an entire new direction to our affections, and consequently to our conduct.

“ If we consider the divine majesty and purity of this glorious agent, and the infinite hatefulness of sin to him; the meanness, guilt, and pollution of the sinner’s heart, when he begins to work upon it; the opposition made by our proud carnal minds at the first; and the ingratitude, neglect, unteachableness, and perverseness with which he is still treated by us, even to the last; we shall scarcely, or not at all, less admire and adore the unwearied tender love of the divine Sanctifier, than that of the Redeemer; but shall most cordially join in that orthodox ascription of praise, ‘ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.’ ”

DISCOVERY OF THAT WORK—ENTHUSIASM
PRECLUDED.

“ THINGS being thus planned in the counsels of God, and every needful preparation made, the gospel of salvation is preached to sinners ; the suitableness, sufficiency, and tender love of the Saviour are represented to them, and the nature, excellency, and preciousness of the blessings he bestows laid open ; and all is in Jehovah’s name freely offered to men in general, and to every one in particular, who is willing to accept of it, and apply to Jesus Christ in believing prayer for it. Hearing these things thus set forth, some, having their hearts touched by the influences of the Holy Spirit, feel *a willingness* before unknown, to return to God in this appointed way, and *a desire*, before unfelt, after the salvation they have heard of ; accompanied by a conviction of its absolute necessity and infinite importance, and a pressing anxious fear of failing of it. These persons are generally ignorant of the origin of these new desires and apprehensions ; seldom or never conceive themselves to be at this time regenerate ;¹ and frequently are total strangers or enemies to the doctrine of regeneration : yet they are disposed, and in some measure encouraged by what they hear, to attempt approaching to God, through Christ, by prayer, and thus seeking the blessings of salvation.

¹ Or “ renewed in the spirit of their minds.”

“ Such persons derive not their encouragement from any impression, or new revelation informing them of God’s everlasting love to them, that Christ died for *them* specially, and intends to save *them* ; nor from confidently believing, without evidence, that this is the case, and groundlessly ascribing this enthusiastical, presumptuous confidence to the Holy Ghost : (by which things Satan *transformed into an angel of light*, has done immense mischief to religion in this age :) but, in hearing the gospel preached, and reading the word of God, they are convinced, and do believe, that God loves sinners, that Christ died for sinners, that the gospel invites sinners, *all* sinners. ‘ All that *will* may come : the worst may come : therefore *I*, being now willing, however vile, may come ; and coming aright (which I pray God that he would teach me to do,) I shall not be cast out ; for *him that cometh he will in no wise cast out.*’ This is their language. Thus the old revelation is abundantly sufficient to encourage those who *believe* it to come to and trust in Christ, for all the blessings which he is exalted to bestow ; without our giving countenance to any pretended new revelations, or inventing a new sort of faith, consisting in the belief of a proposition¹ not contained in scripture, —to the deforming and disgracing of religion, and deluding the souls of men by enthusiasm and counterfeit experience.”

¹ Namely, that Christ died for *me*, A. B., in a special sense, so that he will certainly save *me*.

THE LAW MAGNIFIED BY THE WORK OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT.

“ IF God has ever shown himself so determined to put honour on his law as we have seen, both in the destruction of fallen angels, and in the method which he has adopted of saving fallen men, will he lose sight of this his determination in the *application* of redemption? By no means. Still he will *magnify the law and make it honourable*. . . .

I. CONVICTION OF SIN BY THE LAW.

“ HE has appointed the preaching of the law, in the strictness, extent, and spirituality of its demands, and in the severity of its sanction, and in the righteousness and excellency of both, as the general means of bringing sinners to see their guilt, and misery, and need of salvation.—When the law of God is laid open and applied to the conscience, and it is proved, from the word of God, that it requires a perfectly holy heart and life; supreme love to God, and equal love to man, influencing every imagination, intention, and affection of the soul, every word that is spoken, and every action that is done, to perfect conformity with the divine will; entire devotedness to God’s service, and zeal for his glory, and for the universal benefit of all men, in the most disinterested manner, from the beginning to the end of life: when it is declared in God’s name, and by

his authority, that every failure of this obedience is sin, and that every sin is deserving of eternal death : that *cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them* ; and that this curse shall be executed when even the merciful Jesus shall, as judge of all, say to the wicked, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels* : when further it is shown, by a declaration of the divine perfections, and of our relations and obligations to God and to one another, that this law is *holy, and just, and good* ; that the transgression of it is infinitely wrong and base, and the penalty righteously merited :—then the proper means are used to bring sinners to see their lost condition, and to cry, *What must I do to be saved ?* And, if the divine Spirit by his blessed influences accompany the word, then the sinner's understanding being enlightened, his judgment is convinced ; his conscience, being stirred up to do its office, anticipates the judgment of God ; and he is self-condemned. Inwardly *consenting to the law, that it is good*, he sees by this light what he ought to be : comparing his former conduct, his present dispositions, his best days and best works, with this perfect rule, *his own heart condemns him*, and he becomes more and more sensible that, according to this divine rule of judgment, God will condemn him too. Thus *by the law he becomes dead to the law* ;¹ renounces his dependence on and expectation from it ; *submits to God's righteousness* ; condemns himself ; despairs of help from himself ; and, as

¹ Gal. ii. 19.

a poor hell-deserving, helpless rebel, casts himself, as his only possible remedy, on God's free and sovereign mercy. *God be merciful to me, a sinner!* is now the genuine language of his humbled heart; however moral and strict his former conduct may have been in the sight of man.

REPENTANCE.

“Thus true repentance is begun in the heart; and it increases continually in the experience of the sincere and thriving Christian. When he is enlightened by the Holy Ghost to a discovery of the loveliness and glory of God, and of his own obligations to him, he then perceives the reasonableness and excellency of the law: then he discerns, not only the danger he has incurred by transgressing it, to alarm his apprehensions, but especially the evil, the baseness, ingratitude, and odiousness of his conduct, to the humbling and breaking of his heart for sin. He hath *perverted that which was right*:¹ and his own character and conduct appear odious in his eyes: he *abhors himself*:² he *loathes himself in his own sight*³ for the abominations of his heart and life: his mouth is stopped: his excuses are silenced: his self-admiration is turned into self-abasement: his godly sorrow is excited: he is truly grieved and pained at heart for his sins—and not only or chiefly for the punishment which he fears: and

¹ Job xxxiii. 27.

² Job xlii. 6.

³ Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

this *godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of*. And, the more he sees of the glory of the divine character, and of the excellency of the divine law, in all his subsequent discoveries to the end of his days ; though they serve to remove terror, and to inspire confidence and consolation ; yet, so far from putting a stop to the flow of godly sorrow and repentance, increasing love and gratitude to God, produce an increasing sense of the hatefulness of sin, set the heart more against it, and fill the soul with more deep humiliation and remorse on account of it : and, the more a man grows in all other graces, the more natural do godly sorrow, self-abasement, and deep repentance become to him. So that, though true repentance does not, as some suppose, first spring from a view of Christ dying for *us*, in particular,¹ but from a discovery of the glory of that God whom we have offended, of the goodness of that law which we have broken, and of the hatefulness of those sins which we have committed ; yet the after discovery, by faith, of the glory of God in the gospel, if genuine, tends greatly to enlarge our repentance : and even *the full assurance of hope*, and the utmost certainty that any true saint ever enjoyed that Christ died for *him*, and would certainly save *him*, would still more and more deepen repentance, and promote self-abasement.—And hereby true faith, in its first rise, in its after growth, and in its full maturity, is distinguished from that dead faith, which, by in-

¹ See note on the Pilgrim's Progress, quoted above, p. 193—196.

creasing confidence, destroys any appearances of repentance, with which in its feeble state it might, through fears of hell, be accompanied.

2. THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL SHOWN BY THE LAW.

“THE law thus seen in its glory (for *the ministration of condemnation is glorious*,¹) shows the humble repenting sinner the real glory of the gospel.—*The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness*: and this for many reasons; but, eminently, because they see no need of it: and it must needs appear foolish to a rational creature, for any one to put himself to great trouble, loss, and suffering, to effect a purpose which might have been as well either effected without it, or not effected at all. But, except a man really see the glory and excellency of the law, both in its precept and its penalty, he cannot possibly see any need there was for the incarnation, sufferings, and death of the Son of God, to put honour upon it in the sight of the whole universe, in order that God might honourably pardon, justify, and save those who had broken it. . . . The more extraordinary this transaction was, the more unaccountable and foolish must it appear in the eyes of him who sees not the excellency and goodness of the law. If he be consistent with himself, and understand his own sentiments, it must appear to him that the purpose of conferring such honour on the law had better

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 9.

never have been accomplished at all ; and that the salvation of sinners might have been better effected another way ; namely by an act of sovereign mercy, without any satisfaction to justice."

DELUSIVE EXPERIENCE.

"THESE things I would state strongly, in order to show that antinomianism borders much more nearly upon Socinianism and infidelity than any of the parties are willing to allow : and thus, so far as my feeble voice shall be heard, I would sound the alarm, and endeavour to excite the watchfulness of all true Christians and ministers against this insinuating mischief ; which underhand, and without avowing itself, probably does as much or more harm to the cause of God in this age and nation, than any one of the numerous heresies which prevail ; because it is more specious, less suspected, and therefore less opposed. Nor do I scruple to aver that all those supposed converts, however numerous and in other respects specious, who see no glory and excellence in the law of God ; who think hardly of it, and cannot bear to hear it much insisted on in preaching ; who use derogatory language concerning it, and have a fixed antipathy to ministers who stand up for its excellence ; IF THEIR EXPERIENCE BE CONSISTENT, are mere *stony ground* or *thorny ground* hearers.—Let no man deceive himself ; he who indeed sees no glory in the law of God, which St. Paul calls *holy, just, and good*, cannot possibly perceive any glory in the gospel ; which is designed

by God to put honour on the law. He really has no more knowledge of, or love for the intrinsic excellency of the one than of the other; however his self-love, which influences him to hate *the ministry of condemnation*, may, by co-operating with a strong delusion concerning his own good state, influence him to a *selfish* love of *the ministration of righteousness*.....

“I cannot help expressing my melancholy apprehensions that this sort of religion and experience is too common amongst us, and too little guarded against. May God of his infinite love and mercy stir up the hearts of all his faithful ministers to oppose it; and to counteract that malicious enemy, who thus carries on his black designs, *transformed into an angel of light!*

“He then, who perceives the spirituality and excellency of the law, understands in consequence the malignant nature of sin, and the insufficiency of any temporal sufferings of his own to atone for it; and by the same light he sees the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ in our stead. He sees the utter insufficiency of his own defective righteousness to justify him before God, who *requires truth in the inward parts*; and by the same light he discovers the sufficiency of the divine righteousness of the Mediator for that purpose. Seeing then that in this way God is *just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*; convinced by this internal glory of the gospel that it is indeed from God, he truly believes; in prayer *waits for the hope of righteousness by faith*; and receives *the gift of righteousness from God*—by which gift or

imputation it becomes his own: and now he is allowed to say, *He, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*—Thus the law is our *schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*”

3. THE LAW A RULE OF LIFE.

It may possibly assist the apprehension of some readers to observe, that we are said to be under the law *as a covenant*, when we are to stand or fall by our own obedience or failure of obedience to it. This is to be understood as having been the case of Adam in his probation. But we are under the law *as a rule of life* only, when it forms, indeed, to us the standard of our duty, every deviation from which calls for repentance, and needs to be pardoned, but shall not be imputed to us to condemnation. And this, it is contended, is the case of every true believer in Christ.—This premised, we proceed with the extract.

“God doth further honour his law, in the *application* of redemption, by delivering it, through the hands of a Mediator, to be a RULE OF LIFE to all true believers; who are *not without law to God*, but under *the law to Christ*.

“If the moral law have its foundation in the reason and nature of things, it must necessarily be, in substance, unalterable: for, being perfectly right and good, suited to the nature and relations of God and man, and resulting from them, if it were to be altered it must be for the worse: which

must be impossible to an infinitely wise and good God.....Indeed, as the loveliness of God manifested in the gospel, and the rich goodness exercised towards every true believer, immensely transcend every thing that had before attracted the attention of any creature ; every such character must be under vastly greater obligations to love and obey God than before ; and sin, *the transgression of the law*, must in him be immensely baser.

“ The truth of our present proposition might be argued vastly more at large from almost innumerable passages of the New Testament, wherein Christians are exhorted to perform the duties which the law required, and to avoid the sins which the law forbid, by the same motives by which these things are enforced upon other intelligent agents ; namely the reasonableness, excellency, and profitableness of the perfect will and law of God ; and frequently also by motives peculiar to themselves ; such as the example of Christ, and the obligations of redeeming love : and not unfrequently this is done with express quotations from the ten commandments, which are the very law of God that lay at the foundation of the covenant of works.—Every where the blessed Redeemer and his holy apostles speak most honourably of this law, as *holy, and just, and good* : and, while they are peremptory in declaring that *by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified before God*, they are equally full in enforcing it as a rule of life.—To deny it to be such is either to deny that the believer can sin at all, or to assert that there is some other rule to

distinguish sin from righteousness, than the law of God.

“ But indeed, when antinomianism ventures forth in so undisguised a manner, as openly to deny the law to be a rule of life to believers, it seems almost in vain to combat it by arguments from scripture or from sound reason. Its abettors are then arrived at such a pitch of enthusiasm and spiritual pride, that argument is of no account with them : and we can scarcely do any thing else for them, than pray *that God would give them repentance, to the acknowledgment of the truth, that they may recover themselves from the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.....*

“ I would conclude this head with seriously and solemnly recommending to the attention of my readers the following words of Christ : *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

4. THE LAW WRITTEN IN THE HEART.

“ THE law of God is likewise magnified and made honourable by the work of the Spirit in conversion, *who writes the law in our hearts, and puts it in our inward parts.*—This is one great promise of the new covenant : and by it can be meant no less, nor any other, than that there is a judgment and a disposition of heart produced in

every true believer correspondent to the law of God ; insomuch that every such person *delights in the law of God after the inner man*—and this in exact proportion to the degree of grace which he receives.....Indeed this is the grand distinguishing criterion of true faith.....and is made, together with its effect in our obedient lives, the only decisive *evidence* of our being true believers. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments : he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

HUMILITY MAINTAINED BY MEANS OF THE LAW.

“ Thus also it is that true Christians are, to the end of their lives, kept humble, empty, and dependent ; even by comparing their conduct with the divine law, and finding how very far they are from coming up to its holy and equitable demands.—When a man is brought to some measure of religious seriousness and reformation, and to a degree of knowledge, and ability to discourse on spiritual subjects, with other gifts of that nature, comparing himself with himself and with others, he is very apt to shine in his own eyes, and to imagine that he shines in the eyes of others, and even in the eyes of God ; to forget his vileness ; to indulge self-admiring thoughts ; and even, in spiritual pride, to fancy himself perfect—which is the very depth of diabolical delusion. But the true Christian, loving the law of God, and counting all that to be sin which comes short of its

requirements ; and daily comparing his heart and life with that standard ; grows in humility, godly sorrow, self-abasement, and genuine repentance, as he grows in knowledge and grace : and thus, whatever his attainments or knowledge may be, he lives and dies a poor sinner trusting in free mercy through the atonement of Christ.

“ On the other hand, the false pretender to faith, being at heart an enemy to the law, expresses that enmity by words or deeds, or both ; leads a loose and negligent, if not a scandalous life ; is easily puffed up ; has a stupified, unfeeling conscience ; and, if only he can keep up his confidence of his safe state, is little troubled about his sins, knows nothing of godly sorrow, self-loathing, or mourning for sin : but, while perhaps his ungodly life is the grief or scandal of his neighbourhood, he himself is little affected about it, complains of nothing but his *legality* and self-righteousness, and that he is always doubting his good state ; and expects ministers to soothe and comfort him in every sermon, or he will censure and revile them. This is *a generation of them that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not cleansed from their filthiness*. Nor has the Lord Jesus or his gospel worse enemies in the world.

“ Reader, let me remind thee again that God has determined *to magnify his law, and make it honourable* : and I have endeavoured to show thee in what respects. Let me exhort thee to examine thy heart and life on this subject : for delusions are many and fatal. Is the law of God *written in thy heart* ? Dost thou cordially approve it, love it, and delight in it ? Is it thy daily endeavour

and aim to keep it? Dost thou daily examine thy heart and life by it? Art thou humbled before God, and abased in thy own sight, on account of the imperfection of thy obedience to the good law of God? Does this lead thee simply to trust God's free mercy through the obedient life and death of the great Surety? and influence thee to pray daily for increase of grace, that thou mayest hate sin more, and love holiness more, and keep the law better? Dost thou press forward in this course, *forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before?* Is this thy experience, thy aim, thy prayer? If so, however weak, thou art certainly sincere. But be not deceived: if thou knowest not experimentally these desires, longings, and endeavours, thou art yet a stranger to true religion. *Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

OBSERVATIONS GROUNDED ON THE PRECEDING
DISCUSSIONS.

I. ON FAITH.

“It must be obvious that faith, true faith, of which the scripture speaks so much, and to which it expressly ascribes our justification, is most simply and naturally described by the apostle as *the belief of the truth*; and that other and more intricate definitions only tend to perplex men's minds, to draw them off from plain scripture, and expose them to various delusions of Satan. The

truth to be believed is, in general, the whole system of truths revealed in the Bible ; more particularly, *that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*¹ To believe that that person called Jesus was indeed the Son of God, truly and properly *God manifest in the flesh* ; that he who was crucified on Calvary was Emmanuel, the creator and upholder of all things ; that he became man, lived in suffering and died in agony to expiate our sins, that God the Father *might be just and the justifier* of the true believer ; and that this same person, risen from the dead, is now exalted in glory, and invested with all authority, as the anointed prophet, priest, and king of his church : to believe this truly and heartily is faith : and he that thus *believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*²

“ But no man can properly believe this truth without some measure of knowledge and belief of many other truths. Especially he must believe man, all men, every man, *himself* to be so absolutely and deservedly lost, that they must all have perished, or God would not have been just, unless this wonderful plan had been formed and executed. And he who does see things in this light, with application to himself, is effectually driven from all self-excusing, self-depending hopes.....Again he must believe that there is in God a fountain, full, overflowing, inexhaustible of love, free, rich, and self-excited.....That, as a holy God hath shown himself so determined in punishing sin, yet so in earnest in saving sinners, he now can consistently, and will most freely pardon and save

¹ John xx. 31.² 1 John v. 1.

every sinner who truly comes to him in this way. And he who really believes these truths will have both encouragement and motive enough to come. So that *coming to Christ, trusting in Christ, receiving Christ, &c.*, are the consequence, the certain and immediate consequence of a true faith.....

“ This, well attended to, would prevent many fatal mistakes. Many persons confound two very distinct things together: namely, a belief that Christ is willing to save every one that comes to him, (by which any person may be encouraged to come to him and wait on him for salvation,) and a persuasion that Christ is *their's*, hath forgiven *them*, and will certainly save *them*, though they have no evidence of it at all:—as if a person perishing with hunger, and having food set before him, instead of believing himself welcome, and eating to the refreshment of nature, should, in a frenzy, fancy he *had* eaten, and *was* filled; and, in that vain imagination, should refuse to eat, till he perished! Thus these persons, instead of coming to Christ for pardon, fancy they are pardoned, and are in danger of perishing in this delusion.”

2. ON INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

“ AGAIN we may see that the ground of true faith is the internal glory of the gospel. External evidences have their use, and may be subservient to the production of true faith in some instances: but they never are efficacious alone; while the greater number of established believers, who ven-

ture all on, and part with all for, the gospel, are little acquainted with them. But every true believer, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, sees the internal glory of the gospel, in such a convincing light as silences all objections, and produces efficacious faith.....The gospel has divine wisdom, justice, holiness, truth, and love stamped upon it, and it must be of God.—They therefore, who would use the best means of being determined as to the truth of the gospel, would do well to spend less time in studying controversial writers, and to apply themselves diligently to read the scriptures, to meditate on them, to compare one part with another, and with what they feel within themselves, and see around them: accompanying all with earnest prayer to the great God to teach them the truth, and aiming at the same time to be impartial in their minds. Such persons will, I doubt not, soon be convinced.”

3. ON UNBELIEF—ITS ORIGIN AND CRIMINALITY.

“AGAIN it appears from what has been said, that the great reason of the unbelief of mankind is their self-love. It would be no harder to believe God than to believe man, but that God proposes to us such humbling mortifying truths, which our good opinion of ourselves will not permit us to receive.

“Man by nature is exceedingly disposed to self-exaltation and self-admiration; and has very low and disparaging views of God: but the faith which the scripture requires implies the most

abasing thoughts of ourselves imaginable, and the most high, honourable, and admiring apprehensions of the divine majesty, purity, and excellence. This renders it so extremely difficult for proud man to believe the gospel, however reasonable and demonstrably true it may be. Thus Christ says to the Jews, *How can ye believe who receive honour one of another?* plainly implying that true faith, and seeking our own honour, are incompatible.—On the other hand every species of false religion is calculated by the grand fabricator of error to soothe this corrupt principle, and to feed self-exaltation and self-complacency. Well knowing, from his own temper, how pleasing flattery is to pride, his conduct ever since hath been according to his original artifice, *Ye shall be as Gods.*—Schemes of religion being thus contrived, suited to the corrupt heart of man, little pains need be employed either to render them consistent or plausible, or to confirm them by argument or evidence: they are greedily embraced, and followed by multitudes, who find no inward difficulty in believing them; and they are rapidly propagated in the world. This the history of all ages proves; especially the preference which the Jews ever gave to the false prophets, who spake *smooth things*, before the true prophets who declared to them the truth in the name of the Lord: and the preference given by the primitive churches to other teachers, rather than to the apostles, in particular St. Paul, evidently for the same reason; because those teachers fed their self-righteousness, and spiritual pride, while the apostles taught them to loathe and condemn themselves. . . .

“The love of the world also is another insurmountable obstacle to true faith. While the love of riches, honours, pleasures, predominates in the heart, and a man seeks his happiness in any of these things, an amazing prejudice closes the heart against the truths of the gospel. Every principle in the soul will rise up in opposition to the belief of such truths as have been proposed...

“Hence then it appears that unbelief, being evidently the effect of a corrupt temper of mind, is so far from admitting of any excuse, that it is the grand evidence of man's proud carnal enmity against God, and contempt of him.—It is very remarkable, that proud infidels and ill-judging Calvinists, on very opposite principles, agree in arguing, in direct contradiction to the scriptures, that the want of faith is not criminal: the former from a professed contempt of doctrinal truth; but the latter, because of the inability of man to believe with a true faith: as if all this inability were not merely the want of *will*, arising from the corrupt causes above stated; and as if there were not the same inability in us to love God or man, and to exercise any right disposition, or to perform any good action in a proper manner: which, proceeding from moral, not natural inability, so far from excusing, greatly aggravates all the wickedness of the world.—Let such persons, professing themselves friends of God and the gospel, tremble to think, that they are pleading the cause of his enemies, charging the damnation of unbelievers upon God, making him the author of sin, furnishing their fellow sinners with a plausible excuse for

unbelief, and assisting Satan in quieting their consciences, and hardening their hearts against conviction.

4. ON ASSURANCE OF FAITH AND ASSURANCE OF HOPE.

“ IN the next place I would observe, from what has been discoursed, that *the full assurance of faith* is a very distinct thing from *the full assurance of hope*. I apprehend that this distinction, though not generally marked by divines, is no subtilty, but is of much importance.

“ St. Paul speaks of *the full assurance of understanding*,¹ of *the full assurance of faith*,² and of *the full assurance of hope*.³ Now, according to the principles already stated, it may easily be made to appear how the first of these is fundamental to the second, and that to the third.

“ When the understanding is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, to see the glory and loveliness of the divine character, the excellency and reasonableness of God's law, and the other truths depending on these, as above explained ; a clew is then obtained by which to unravel the many difficulties that before perplexed the soul in considering the several doctrines of the gospel. Before, all appeared confused, inconsistent, contradictory, unintelligible : but now all is viewed in a new light. The confusion vanishes, apparent contradictions are easily reconciled, and all appears consistent,

¹ Col. ii. 2.

² Heb. x. 22.

³ Heb. vi. 11.

harmonious, and easily deducible from obvious principles. But this is not attained all at once. At first a glimmering light breaks in upon the soul, like the day-break in the east, and brings a convincing power with it. Gradually this light increases, in the diligent use of means. As it increases, difficulties vanish ; until at length the diligent soul rises above perplexities, and attains that *full assurance of understanding*, which makes the whole scheme of divine truth manifest in its harmony and glory.

“ From this *full assurance of understanding* springs *the full assurance of faith*. A faint and feeble understanding of the glory of divine truth produces some degree of faith : as the measure of such understanding increases, faith increases ; and, when the soul is enriched with the full assurance of the former, the latter rises in a corresponding degree, and hesitation and doubt are, for the time, excluded. But, as it is found in experience that divine truths are not at all times equally present to the soul ; do not at all times appear alike distinct, evident, bright, glorious, and lovely ; but with very considerable variations, arising partly from the connexion which our bodily frame has with the state of our souls, and partly from indolence, worldly cares, and our remaining corrupt affections, Satan’s temptations, and the withholding of the Holy Spirit’s influences, when by sin we have grieved him : hence it follows, that no man’s faith is always alike firm and assured. At some times divine truths appear so near, real, bright, and glorious, that no doubt remains, and the soul embraces, delights in, and is influenced

by them in doing and suffering, venturing and renouncing, without hesitation or reluctance: as if the truths believed were objects of sight and sense. At other times they appear more remote and dim and obscure: and, although the recollection either of the external evidence, or of the internal excellency, or of these bright and convincing discoveries of them, stays the mind, confirms the judgment, and excludes prevailing doubt; yet unbelief struggles, and faith must struggle too; and the soul amid this conflict acts with less vigour and more hesitation than at other times. Yet still that person is an *assured believer*, notwithstanding these variations and conflicts, who is so satisfied in his judgment concerning the truth of the revelations contained in the Bible, as to account all doubts respecting them his infirmity, his temptation, his sin, and grief; to oppose them, pray against them, and be humbled for them, as such; and habitually to act as one who does indeed believe that things really are, and will be found to be as the Bible declares.

“From this assurance of faith springs lively *hope* of our own interest in the promised blessings. A man who has such a view of the internal glory of divine truths, as to be habitually and assuredly persuaded that they are from God, has indeed that very experience which might convince him that the salvation of the gospel belongs to him, and produce *assurance of hope*, if he did but know how justly to reason from the premises: for that *God who caused the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into his heart, to give him the light of*

the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But generally this light is small at first ; much darkness remains ; and many things prevent the soul's judging accurately in its own case : so that it is not only very possible, but very common, for persons to be so deeply convinced of the truth of the gospel, and to be so influenced by the conviction, as to be evidently proved true and assured believers—persons who have no allowed or prevailing doubt of its being the truth of God—who are yet very far from *the full assurance of hope* ; yea are greatly discouraged by fears that they have *no part or lot in the matter*. That the gospel is true they assuredly believe, and do not scruple to stake their all upon it, and risk their dearest interests for it : that all true believers shall be saved they doubt not : but whether they are themselves true believers they much doubt ; indeed their hopes of it are comparatively feeble.—Now this, at first sight, may appear very strange : but, when we consider what cautions the Bible gives against deceiving ourselves ; what deceitfulness there is in the heart of man ; what subtlety Satan employs to deceive ; what numbers are actually deceived ; when these things are laid together, no wonder that a sincere humble person, who respects the word of God, is acquainted with, and jealous of his own heart, and greatly afraid of delusion where so much is at stake, should hesitate in this matter ; should not be apt to conclude at once that his faith is living and effectual, or to be over-confident. However, his faith produces a degree of *hope* of the right sort. *My soul longeth for thy salvation, and I*

hope in thy word. He is assured that God is infinitely merciful ; that he gave his Son to die for sinners ; that there is *forgiveness with him*, consistently with his justice, and to his glory, for even the chief of sinners ; that sinners are invited to come and receive freely ; that all who come rightly are accepted ; he is conscious that he desires to come aright : he hopes that the Lord will teach him so to come—for *good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way* : and so he hopes, though diffidently, that he shall be saved.

“ Further : supposing his judgment sound, and his conduct conscientious and diligent, his hope grows stronger. Comparing daily his prevailing desires, experiences, affections, and dispositions with what he reads in the Bible concerning those which are peculiar to true Christians, as distinguished from hypocrites and self-deceivers, he is conscious that there is an agreement between them. Feeling stronger aversion to sin, and more earnest desires after holiness, love to God and man, zeal for the divine honour in the world, and other dispositions of the children of God ; accompanied with tenderness of conscience, mourning for sin, distate for former carnal delights, and longing after spiritual pleasures, he becomes more and more satisfied that, though he be but a feeble Christian, just beginning to be a Christian, yet assuredly he *is* one.—Thus he comes to an *assured hope*, settled in his judgment ; and is satisfied habitually, from the testimony of his conscience, compared with the word of God, that his state is safe.—But at times he feels more sensibly love,

gratitude, delight, confidence in God, zeal for his cause, through the immediate influence of *the Spirit of adoption*, who, *thus witnessing with his spirit that he is a child of God*, gives him a more delightful assurance, yea foretaste of salvation; which not only is a present refreshment, but a confirmation of his assured hope for the future.

TRUE AND FALSE CONFIDENCE.

“But this *full assurance of hope* is not of that overbearing nature that nothing can shake it. It will maintain its vigour by means of daily exercised repentance and faith, amidst all the infirmities incident even to a thriving Christian. But, as it springs from conscious sincerity in choosing, trusting, and living to Christ, and from the immediate influences of the sanctifying Spirit; none but the thriving Christian can preserve it. Flagrant sins, or great declensions, or even allowed slothfulness, will not only enfeeble but destroy it: nor can it be restored or recovered but by deep repentance and renewed diligence.—Herein it differs from a false confidence. A false confidence does not spring from evidence. They who possess it cannot *give a reason of the hope that is in them*. They are not confident in proportion to their conscientiousness and activity in the service of God; but without any regard to it. They do not arrive at their confidence in consequence of deep self-examination, and prayer to God to search them; but without it. They do not maintain it by constant and daily watchfulness, tenderness,

and diligent examination by the rules of the word : to this they are averse ; and they do not love that word which puts them upon it. They do not lose their confidence by slothfulness and sin."

REASONS FOR INSISTING ON THE DISTINCTION
BETWEEN THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH AND
THE ASSURANCE OF HOPE.

(1.) "Because they are produced by *very different evidence* :—the neglect of observing which causes much confusion in the judgment, and much perplexity in the experience of true Christians, and is a great hindrance to their establishment ; and leaves Satan an open door by which to enter to deceive others.

"All assurance, which is not egregiously enthusiastic and delusory, must arise from evidence seen and perceived by the mind. If there be no evidence that a proposition is true, or if the mind perceive none, any degree of assent, and much more all confidence respecting it, must be irrational and absurd. A wise Christian believes nothing without evidence, or with confidence disproportioned to the evidence. Does he assuredly believe the Bible to be the word of God ? His assurance arises from clearly perceiving the evidence, external and internal, that it is so—particularly the excellence and glory of its contents. Doth he believe any particular doctrine ? He believes it because he perceives evidence of its being contained in the scriptures ; and, when on mature examination he is fully convinced that it

is so, his objections are silenced, his doubts vanish, and he believes it with full assurance.—In like manner, hath he the full assurance of hope? that is, doth he with full assurance believe himself a renewed man, and consequently in the way to heaven? He believes this on evidence clearly perceived. Having learned from God's word what that work on the mind is, in which conversion to God consists; and what are the desires, experiences, conflicts, and character of a true servant of God; on a careful, daily examination of his own past and present character and experience, with many prayers to the Searcher of hearts to render him impartial in the solemn inquiry, and to lead him to a just conclusion; he perceives such an agreement between the two, as is evidence to him that he is the servant of God. Proportioned to the clearness with which he perceives this evidence is the degree of his confidence: and, when conscious integrity and lively actings of grace have put this matter beyond doubt, he is fully assured of it; has *the full assurance of hope*; and, if he be acquainted with the scriptural security which God has given that he will not forsake his people, he is fully assured of everlasting salvation.—He is certain that he is a Christian, though deeply abased that his grace is so little, and his corruption so great: for full assurance of hope always, if scriptural, springs from consciousness of the *reality* of sanctification, though never from an apprehension of a *large degree* of it. The former is consistent with the profoundest humility: the latter, being a proud thought, is not apt to rise, much less to prevail in the heart of an assured Christian: and

when it does, it clouds his evidence, and weakens his assurance.

“But sin of any sort, both by grieving the Holy Spirit, and by preventing the soul from perceiving the evidences of its conversion, always interrupts assurance, and introduces doubting in a truly gracious soul, which nothing can exclude, till deep repentance and lively actings of faith and grace have removed the obstacles, and, the evidence being clearly perceived, assurance is restored. What then shall we say to that sort of full assurance which is avowedly without evidence, and against evidence—for an unholy life is stronger evidence against a man’s conversion, than any story of experiences can be for it? What can we say, but that it is gross enthusiasm and Satanical delusion? So I deliberately judge; and thus I would avow my judgment, because the credit of the gospel and the interest of souls are at stake: otherwise I would not wish to offend. Only let the scriptures be searched to see whether these things be so or not.”

DOUBTING.

(2.) “I insist on this distinction because it makes it evident that *doubting* is not always unbelief, but often the contrary.

“For want of attending to the distinction which has been laid down, persons at the commencement of their religious course are hurried on to assurance, by being taught that doubting [of their own safe state] is unbelief and a great sin. Hence

they try by all means to excite in their own minds a confidence of their safety ; and, being impatient of uneasiness and uncertainty, they are in a great hurry to be delivered from their doubts, and comforted, by any means. This puts them off their guard, and gives Satan an opportunity of deluding many into false comfort and vain confidence. Being now very happy, there follows a wonderful flow of affections, all springing too often from self-love under the influence of delusion.¹ By and by these affections subside ; and, having no abiding principle of divine life, those who had been the subjects of them become habitually dull, dead, and worldly. Now their hopes are shaken, and they have great difficulty to keep up their confidence ; and all this is called struggling against unbelief and a legal spirit : and, though their consciences are not very tender in other things, yet in this point they are very conscientious. All doubting of their good state they studiously shun ; they strive to keep up their confidence ; run from place to place to find something to comfort them ; want ministers to soothe them ; abuse the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints—though they have no evidence of their being saints ; and, in a word, having once been deluded, they must never be undeceived, but must live and die fighting against supposed ‘ unbelief’—*with a lie in their right hands.*—For the love of Christ

¹ The reader must by no means suppose it meant, that in all cases lively affections and great happiness in the early stages of religious profession are thus delusive : he must attend carefully to the particulars of the case here described.

and of souls, let all ministers guard against such a dreadful delusion !

“ Now let what has been discoursed be impartially considered, and it will evidently appear that the doubting which the scripture condemns is not doubting our own good and safe state, but doubting whether what God hath spoken be true ; whether he be able, faithful, and willing to be as good as his word ; to save true believers, and to provide for and preserve his people in dangers and difficulties. I would challenge any one to point out a single exception to this rule.—Unbelief *makes God a liar* ; but to doubt whether I am a Christian or not does not do so ; for God has nowhere declared that I am.—Nay, he has declared that persons of such and such a character are ungodly, and the children of the devil : and, if I be of such a character, then, in proportion as I credit what God says, I shall not only doubt my good state, but be sure that I am no Christian : and, if I do not in such a case doubt my safety, I evidently do *make God a liar* ; that is, treat him as such.—Again, if he declares positively what is the character of all true believers, and I either am not conscious that this is my character, or never examined whether it is or not, and yet will not doubt of my good state, I *make him a liar* ; for I will not believe his word.

“ There is abundant evidence that the Bible is the word of God ; and we cannot be unacquainted with it but through pride and sloth ; and therefore to doubt of it is sinful. There is, further, abundant evidence that such and such truths are

revealed in the Bible ; and it is therefore criminal to doubt of them : there is abundant evidence that Christ is able, willing, faithful, to save all that come to him, and very sincere in his invitations ; and therefore it is sinful unbelief for me to doubt his power or willingness to save me—in case *I come aright to him*. But, unless I am conscious of sincerity in repenting of and forsaking sin ; casting myself on God's free mercy in Christ ; renouncing the world ; and giving myself up to the Lord, to serve him in righteousness and true holiness ; I have no sufficient evidence that I am a true believer : and, so far is it from being sinful, in such circumstances, to doubt of my good state, that it is my bounden duty to do it ; and in that uncertainty to *examine myself whether I be in the faith*,¹ and never to rest till I find evidence of my conversion to God ; yea, and always to renew my doubting in proportion as this evidence disappears.

“ It is true, when we are conscious of *sincerity* in these things, and yet indulge doubting because we are not *perfect*, this is a sinful unbelief ; because it is a refusal to believe *what God says*, when he declares in his word that persons of such an experience, and affections, and character, are converted, and in the way to heaven ; or it is fancying that there are some exceptions—that we ourselves are exceptions, though conscious of the things described, because there are other things opposing themselves, and preventing our *doing*, as we would, *the things which we would*.

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

“ In many ways our doubting may *originate* in unbelief, and so be a sin ; and, at all times, it is our sin to be of such a character, and to live in such a way as to have cause to doubt : but to doubt of our Christian state when we have no evidence of it, but much evidence to the contrary, is so far right, and the only way to be brought right : and not to doubt, in such a case, is blind and carnal security, bold presumption in defiance of God’s word, pernicious enthusiasm, and diabolical delusion. And all assurance of our conversion and safe state, which rises above the degree of evidence which exists for it, partakes of the same character, and produces a measure of the same consequences.

“ Would to God these things were attended to in a manner proportioned to their importance to the credit of religion, the glory of God, and the good of souls !”

5. FINAL PERSEVERANCE

Is the next doctrine deduced from the principles already laid down. There is nothing uncommon in the writer’s way of arguing in support of this doctrine, but on the use and application of it he has observations which deserve to be quoted.

“ Not every work is that work of grace, which being begun, a faithful God stands engaged *to perform unto the day of Jesus Christ*. A man may be reformed in his outward conduct : be proselyted to a new sect ; be a convert to a new and orthodox system of doctrine ; have convictions and

alarms followed by comforts, in a regular order ; be able to relate a very plausible experience with sincerity ; make a credible profession ; have high affections ; be endued with valuable gifts for the edification of others ; yea, preach like an apostle ; *speak with the tongues of men and of angels* ; work miracles ; have a flaming zeal ; abound in all outward duties ; outstrip real Christians in all external appearances, and be more free from any thing offensive ; and yet not be converted. This is plain from many examples of scripture. Nor can man upon earth, from any external evidence, absolutely pronounce another to be a converted person. This is the prerogative of a heart-searching God. *Charity hopeth all things* : and we ought to judge favourably, so far as is consistent with *withdrawing from those who walk disorderly*. Light enough ministers and Christians may have, from the words and works of men, to regulate their own conduct : but, if they pretend to certainty, they pretend to more than any can have respecting another, except by revelation. When therefore one who has made a high profession, like Judas, apostatizes, or finally falls away, we ought to say, A specious hypocrite is unmasked ; not, A saint has fallen away.—Though however we cannot be assured of others, we may of ourselves, by *the testimony of our conscience* to the sincerity of our love to God and holiness, &c.”

We may here take occasion to remark, that the question concerning the final perseverance of the saints, whether it be a true doctrine or not, must be decided by the evidence of scripture exclusively,

and not at all (as is often attempted,) by an appeal to facts: because every case adduced against it may be solved in one, perhaps in either, of these two ways,—that the person never was sincere, or, that we do not certainly know his fall to have been total and final.

As the next passage speaks of *guarding* the doctrine, I would observe, that many persons are very averse to the use of this term: it appears to convey to their minds, inevitably, the idea of proposing a doctrine timidly and feebly, bereft of more than half its force and glory. That the term bore no such sense in the author's use of it, I trust it is superfluous to state. Then only is a doctrine properly *guarded*, when it is proposed as scripture proposes it: in the same manner, for the same purposes, with the same restrictions, and no others, and particularly in connexion with all those *other* truths with which scripture combines it. This premised, I proceed with my extracts.

“Ministers, in preaching this doctrine, are particularly called well to state and guard it, lest, through inadvertency, they *take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs*; or, at least, permit the dogs to run away with it. I rest this appeal with the consciences of all sober and godly men, whether the unguarded preaching of this doctrine has not done immense mischief in the church of God, by *strengthening the hands* of those who are living in sin, *that they should not return from their evil ways*. Numbers on insufficient grounds take it as a determined matter that they are saints; and, being taught that the saints always persevere,

and are recovered from their declensions, they soothe themselves in their sloth and worldliness; sleep secure in sin; are proof against the terrors of God's word, which belong to the wicked, and not (they think) to them; are a scandal and reproach to religion; and live and die under the delusion.

“ But, not only can no man on scriptural grounds take encouragement from this doctrine, except he have substantial evidence of his being a true Christian; no man can legitimately take *more* encouragement from it, than *in proportion* to his evidence.—Therefore true saints under declension, having their evidence obscured, must lose their assurance that they are saints, and have no right to comfort from this doctrine, further than they are consciously sincere in repenting and turning to God. If these things were carefully attended to, a formidable objection to the doctrine, drawn from the abuse of it, would be more effectually answered than by volumes of controversial arguments.

“ Again, no man has any right to take encouragement from this doctrine, further than he is consciously sincere in using all the means which God has appointed for his preservation. God keeps his people by inclining them to *keep themselves*; ¹ by *putting his fear in their hearts, that they should not depart from him*: and this makes them constant and diligent in using the appointed means of grace with earnestness: and alarmed when slackness creeps upon them—by which

¹ Jam. i. 27. Jude 21. 1 John v. 18.

means that evil is remedied. And, if at any time they get over this barrier, and grow secure, he rouses them by rebukes and chastisements; which stir them up again to diligence: and thus he preserves them from falling away. The means and end are inseparable in reality, and should never be separated in speculation.—If it were possible for God so to leave a true saint, that he should entirely cease to watch and pray, to read, and meditate, and hear the word, and be entirely secure in sin and carnality, and live and die in such a state; it would be possible for such an one to perish: yea, it would be impossible that he should not. But this God will never do. He will by the influences of his Spirit, and the chastisements of his rod, bring him to repentance, and incline his heart to continue in a course of religion habitually and perseveringly to the end. And *he that endureth to the end shall be saved*. The rest were stony ground or thorny ground hearers.

“But now when a person has no heart to watch, pray, hear, read, meditate, examine himself, believe, obey; and yet pretends to trust in God’s engagement that true saints shall persevere, he perversely counteracts God’s method; takes for granted the very thing which wants proof, by assuming himself to be a true saint without evidence, and even against evidence; *thinks himself something*, when probably he is *nothing*, thus *deceiving his own soul*; and, should there be any grace in his heart, (which is extremely unlikely,) he takes the very method the devil would have him take for continuing in this awful situation, by shutting out that fear which God puts into the hearts of

his people to bring them back from their declensions.

“ This again, well considered, is the best answer to another objection against this doctrine, as if it rendered watchfulness unnecessary. It is not designed to comfort even true Christians in sloth and lukewarmness ; it being much better for them in such a state to be put in great fear : but to cheer the diligent, active, thriving Christian in his conflict with Satan and the corruptions of his own heart ; that, while fighting, animated by the assurance of victory, he may fight manfully, when otherwise he would be discouraged by fears lest all should be in vain. And, if Satan and wicked men abuse this doctrine, as they do every other good gift of God, this should only teach the servants of God to protest against such abuses, not to deny the doctrine of God’s word, *and offend against the generation of his children.*

CASES OF DECLENSION AND INCONSISTENCY.

“ AND here I would propose it to the serious consideration of pious ministers, whether in some cases an improper and prejudicial method is not adopted in dealing with our people. When persons who have appeared for some time to be sincere Christians fall into any particular fault, though a considerable one ; or when there are many infirmities which call for ministerial reproof ; I readily allow that it is best to treat with them as Christians,—not much admitting the contrary supposition. But, when such persons repeatedly bring

scandals on the cause of Christ ; or habitually live an unfruitful, inconsistent life : or have greatly declined in zeal and liveliness—I mean zeal for and liveliness in the great and substantial parts of religion : I am of opinion that the supposition ought not only to be put, but to be urged home upon their consciences, that they have only deceived themselves and others, and are not real Christians at all.—I deem it abundantly proved that no mere man can certainly know any other man to be a true Christian, and ought not to judge by any thing but his *fruits* : and therefore it seems to me that a minister who sees no good fruit in a man's life, and yet judges him a true Christian, and deals with him accordingly, exceeds his commission. This I propose to the serious attention of my brethren in the ministry. I have no intention to dictate, as I have no right ; but simply I propose my sentiments about an important part of our office, in the performance of which every one who feels its weight, and knows its difficulty, will be glad of all the light he can get from any quarter. Let it be candidly examined by those who love Christ and the souls of men ; and may the Lord *give us a right understanding in all things !*"

SCANDALS.

WITH the observations just recited is connected a discussion of the case of notorious misconduct in professedly religious persons,—proceeding precisely on the same principles with certain papers

which have been already inserted in this volume ; and which, as exhibiting the author's sentiments at a maturer period of his life, supersede the necessity of introducing any thing more of what he had here written, than the following concluding remarks :

“ Characters really unsound, as well as discreditable, being encouraged in religious societies, open the mouths of opposers ; quiet the consciences of those who are brought under concern about their souls ; give awakened persons wrong notions of religion ; as if it were no more than a set of notions and a peculiar language, and not holiness of heart and life ; grieve and mislead true Christians ; and every way produce infinite mischief to the cause of God and the souls of men. As mortified limbs, the body cannot be in health till they be cut off : as unfruitful branches, the vine will not thrive till they are pruned away.—But such persons have no higher principle than self-love ; nor higher aim than to be comfortable : nor higher notion of comfort than being encouraged in the hope of going to heaven at last. The glory of God, the credit of religion, the good of souls, the excellency of holiness, the joy of communion with God, are nothing to them. All therefore that you say on these subjects they hear with perfect indifference. They will even bear to be reprov'd for their faults, and be willing that you should treat them as a poor sort of Christians, (some of them at least will bear this—for self-love works in different ways,) if only you will encourage them to hope that they *are* Christians, and shall not go to hell—which is all they care for. So that the only

way of coming at them, either to undeceive them for their own good, or to detect them for the good of others, is by telling them plainly, that they who do so and so, and are of such a character, are not Christians:—by addressing them in St. Paul's language, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap: This ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*"

THE AUTHOR'S OWN VIEW OF HIS WORK.

"I BY no means pretend to have laid down an exact and complete system of evangelical truth. Possibly many things may have been omitted or mistated, or be redundant. I can only say that I have stated them as they appeared to me, after a careful examination of the word of God; much consideration of what is going on in the church and in the world, as far as my contracted observation extends, and of what has passed in my own experience; with many earnest prayers to God to enlighten my understanding in *the truth as it is in Jesus*. Nor have I made one wilful omission, alteration, or addition; but, as far as conciseness admitted, have simply declared my views of divine truth, in such a manner as most effectually to undermine several sorts of doctrine which appear to me to dim the glory, corrupt the purity, and obstruct the efficacy of the gospel, and to harden men in opposing or abusing it, according as best suits their corrupt inclinations.

“ In a day when even professors of strict religion are so miserably divided in their sentiments, I am far enough from expecting that all, or even the majority, will accede to what I have written. Many will no doubt think that I give too strong and open a testimony to the doctrines of Calvinism: while others, equally numerous, will, I easily foresee, be dissatisfied with what has been said on that subject, for an opposite reason.—Some will be displeased at my saying so very much on the excellency and the honour of the law of God, and the absolute necessity of every true believer’s cordially loving and greatly delighting in it: while others, I am well aware, will be equally offended at my entirely discarding all our personal obedience in the great concern of our justification; contending that all our obedience deserves punishment for being no better, and that we must be justified by faith alone receiving and pleading the imputed divine righteousness of Christ.—Some, I foresee, will think I am much too strict, and that I discourse in such a manner as tends to exclude many who think well of their own state, and are thought well of in the churches of Christ: while others will be ready to think I give too much licence by placing perfection as absolutely out of our reach in this life, and intimating that the best must expect to live and die poor sinful creatures, very far indeed from what they ought to be, and fain would be, and needing repentance, and forgiveness by mere mercy, through the blood of Christ, to the last.—Some will, I know, object to what has been delivered, as too argumentative, and paying too much deference to reason; as if all

true religion, being from God the fountain of reason, could be other than infinitely reasonable, when rightly understood, and impartially and humbly attended to: while others will probably be disgusted at my standing up for doctrines so generally exploded by the great pretenders to reason, and allowing that, though nothing in religion can be contrary to true unprejudiced reason, yet many things may to proud, carnal, self-admiring men appear so; and many really are *above* our reason, and can be known only by divine revelation humbly believed. *Thy testimony is sure, and giveth wisdom to the simple.*

“I have no inclination to enter the lists of controversy with any of these descriptions of persons, being more pleasantly, perhaps more profitably employed; and being deeply convinced that sharp and acrimonious disputation is not one of the weapons of a Christian’s warfare, being *carnal*, and therefore not *mighty through God* for demolishing Satan’s strong-holds of error and vice. Let then every one impartially judge for himself how far what has been taught is scriptural: and may the God of all truth lead the writer and every reader more and more deeply into the sanctifying knowledge of his truth!”

CHARITY OF THE AUTHOR TOWARDS THOSE
WHO DIFFER FROM HIM.

“NOR do I mean to insinuate that none are true Christians who have not these views of divine truth. This is commonly objected to strenuous

advocates for any system of doctrine, but often with palpable injustice. I believe many Arminians are true Christians: yea even persons avowing antinomian sentiments may be true Christians, through the inconsistency which may exist between their sentiments and the state of their hearts: much more then may persons who have embraced sentiments *leaning* that way, and *leading* to antinomianism, and as such protested against in this work. I will not pretend to say, nor do I think any man can say exactly, how much explicit knowledge of divine truth is absolutely essential to salvation. I do not mean to condemn men's persons, but their errors; nor their errors, because none can be saved that hold them, but because many are deceived by means of them, many prejudiced, many hardened; many sincere souls kept from growing in grace; and religion much deformed, disgraced, and injured by them. But this I will say, that, whatever darkness there may be on a man's understanding, unless he feels and behaves towards God as a sinner justly condemned for breaking a righteous law, and expects salvation of mere grace in God's way, and as reconciled to God, as loving his service, and longing after holiness—that holiness which the law requires,—and so living holily in sincerity and truth, he cannot be saved, according to the Bible....

“ Though some measure of *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* is always communicated in regeneration, and therefore he cannot be a true Christian who has none of it, yet many of the regenerate have it in a very scanty measure; and, through prejudices of edu-

cation, and the want of clear instruction, they may hold in their minds sentiments inconsistent with it. For it not only may be, but frequently is the case, that men hold inconsistent and contradictory principles. I should have no scruple in declaring, that every *consistent* antinomian is in the way to perdition : and yet I charitably hope that many individuals theoretically adopting antinomian principles will be saved. The foundation is rightly laid, but *hay, straw, stubble* are built upon it : this will be *burned* ; but they will be *saved, yet so as by fire*—as when a man's house is burned over his head. They hold sentiments derogatory to the honour of God's law, but, through the confusedness that rests on man's understanding, they hold also contrary sentiments : the former are but notions, or at least do not entirely sway them ; the latter are vital principles, and they feel and act under their influence.....Every one who in any degree speaks dishonourably of the law of God, and yet allows the real satisfaction of the death of Christ, and the necessity of holiness of heart and life, does in words contradict himself ; and, if he understood himself, would perceive that he held sentiments diametrically opposite to one another :—for the satisfaction of Christ's death was intended to put infinite honour on the law of God ; and holiness is no other than that law written in the heart, and transcribed into the life. Such persons I would not condemn in the gross—though I think their religion of a peculiarly suspicious nature, and that they have especial need to *examine themselves whether they be in the faith* : but I would aim to lead them to

a more consistent and complete knowledge of the truth ; in part for their own profit, and still more for the honour of religion and the good of souls ; being deeply persuaded that Satan has got great advantage by such means."

LOVE TO GOD.

"EVERY true believer sees so much of the glory and loveliness of God in being what he is, infinitely great and infinitely good, as to have a supreme and entire approbation and esteem of his whole character: and, however scanty his knowledge, or confused his judgment may be, or whatever inconsistent opinions he may from any cause have imbibed, yet he feelingly abhors the idea of any part of the divine character being different from what it is; and would not for all the world have God less holy, righteous, faithful, or merciful, than he is. He who heartily wishes any part of God's character altered is evidently an enemy to what God is, and hates him at heart. Every truly converted person is heartily reconciled to the divine perfections, and dreads, as blasphemy, the very thought of wishing God to be of another character than he is. There may be many things in the divine conduct which, through remaining darkness, he does not well understand, or see to be consistent with the perfections of God; yet he is in his judgment so well satisfied of the divine wisdom, righteousness, and goodness, that he gives the Most High, if I may so speak, credit for it, that all is as it should be,

though he cannot see it. And this submission of our poor scanty capacities to the infinite wisdom and holiness of God is the very temper of *a little child*, without which we *cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*.

“Nay, not only does every true believer cordially approve of the whole divine character as revealed in scripture, but, so far as his views are clear and distinct, he admires it. *How great is his goodness! and how great is his beauty!* He is perfectly astonished, and is all amazement, while he contemplates the wisdom, righteousness, faithfulness, loving kindness, and mercy of God, as harmoniously revealed in his word, and displayed in his works. He feels his heart at times ravished with the love of so lovely an object: and at the same time is astonished and humbled that he loves him no more. And in his judgment he is deeply convinced that the Lord is worthy of being supremely loved, yea loved with all his powers, even when, to his shame and grief, he *feels* little love to him. Comparing the loveliness of the Creator with the loveliness of the creatures, he perceives, in his judgment, that the former eclipses the latter infinitely more than the sun does the stars; and is humbled that his feelings are no more answerable to his convictions—that he loves the creature so much and God so little, even when his conduct evinces that he does love the Lord his God *more than father, or mother, or wife, or child, or liberty, or life*. Nay he *rejoices in the Lord, delights himself in God!* rejoices that he reigneth, that he is sovereign, that he is unchangeably what he is; rejoices ex-

ceedingly in contemplating his wonderful works. *His meditation of him is sweet : His soul is satisfied, as with marrow and fatness, while he praiseth God with joyful lips.*—He is cordially devoted to God's cause and honour, in the world ; and sweetly longs and prays, *Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven !* The advancement of the cause of God and true religion fills him with joy ; its depression grieves him at his heart : nor can he be comforted but by the assurance that it shall finally prevail.¹—He chooses God for his portion, and longs for no other happiness, in time and in eternity, than in being with God, bearing his image, beholding his glory, enjoying his favour, singing his praises, and serving, with all his powers, Him *in whom his soul delighteth.*—Even the favours which God bestows upon him, personally, most affect his heart, as leading him to contemplate the glorious excellencies of so great and gracious a Being.

“Every true believer has somewhat of this spirit, as is evident from the whole scripture : and in proportion to his knowledge and faith he has more and more of it. And, if this be once left out of religion, and, in our love to God, we have no regard to the perfections of his character, which constitute his infinite loveliness, what do we but set up an idol in our heart ; frame a conception of God suited to our own taste ; assume that he loves *us* ; and then, in return, feel a love for our own idol ?—for nothing can distinguish the true

¹ See Daniel ii. 34, 35, 44 ; vii. 9, 10, 14, 18, 27.

God from idols, but the glories and excellencies of his character.—Even thus far, in its consequences, does the notion of not loving God for his own loveliness, but ONLY for his benefits, go: though many who *notionally* espouse it are not aware of this, and mean no such thing.”

LOVING THE LAW OF GOD, THOUGH IT
CONDEMNS US.

“EVERY true believer, seeing the beauty and loveliness of the divine character, sees proportionably the ground and reason of the law of God; and thus learns to love it. St. Paul *delighted in the law of God after the inner man*, because it was *holy, and just, and good*; and David is continually breaking forth into the strongest expressions of love to the law: and indeed it is *written in the hearts* of all true believers, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace,¹ so that *they count all God's commandments concerning all things to be right, and hate every false way*.—Antinomians indeed pretend that it is impossible to love a law which condemns us: in direct opposition to the word of God. . . . If a man is betrayed into acts of treason against a lawful and excellent prince, so as to attempt to subvert his government and dethrone him: in case he ever truly repent of his wickedness, he will be brought to approve the law and its sentence, as equitable, reasonable, and salutary, and will acknowledge, as the thief on the

¹ Heb. viii.

cross did, (who is an eminent example of a man approving the law which condemned him,) that he indeed *suffers justly*, and deserves his doom ; and will die exhorting the spectators to loyalty, and praying for the welfare of his offended sovereign : and, if he does the contrary, if he dies quarrelling with the law, and the sentence denounced, it is plain that he dies impenitent, and an enemy and traitor at heart. And such are all those who quarrel with the law of God because it condemns them. This is sullenly to arraign the conduct of the lawgiver, and to vindicate their own : and it argues them enemies at heart....

“ Self-evident it is, that every true penitent approves of the law that condemns him, and that the very spirit of impenitency is, to throw the blame off ourselves upon the law and the lawgiver ; which is *going about to establish our own righteousness, and not submitting ourselves to the righteousness of God* : it is self-righteousness in its worst form. If it were wrong to give us so strict a law, and to condemn us for breaking it, then would it be reasonable for God to be reconciled to us without our approving of the law, or acknowledging the justice of our condemnation : but, if we alone are to blame, then it is fitting that we acknowledge this, justify God, approve his law, and learn to love it, before we are pardoned and restored to favour. And so it is, however men may be misled, through Satan’s artifices, to deny it.”

The error here combated, as far as it is the error of really good men, admits perhaps of the following explanation.

We can never feel *peace*, and *comfort*, and the actings of a *filial*, *confidential* love to God and his law, so long as we apprehend the sentence of condemnation to stand out against us, and to be ready to be executed upon us: and hence it is supposed that we cannot *love*, or be in heart *reconciled* to, either God or his law, till we *know* that we are delivered from condemnation.—Many, indeed, are the occasions in which *love*, and the *joyful actings* of love, are thus confounded together. But the Psalmist as much showed his love for God when he abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes, for his sins against him; and implored, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit;” as when, at other times and under other circumstances, he “triumphed in the God of his salvation.” *Conformity of disposition* may be said to be the essence of love to God: and this may, and unquestionably often does exist, where the person is as yet far from being assured of his acceptance with God.—This conformity of disposition is also produced by the renewing, regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, and not by the previous knowledge of forgiveness—according to an important statement made in an earlier part of this volume.¹

One error naturally gives birth to another. Love to God being confounded with rejoicing in him, and it being assumed that there can be no love where there are not the joyous and confident actings of that principle, we are told that we ‘can never love God till we first know that he loves

¹ Letter, and Note from the Pilgrim’s Progress, above, pp. 193—196.

us ;' that is, not merely till we believe that "there is forgiveness with him," and that he is ready to be reconciled to us, but till we know that he now regards us, individually, with that special "favour which he beareth to his chosen people."—But here the question naturally arises, How are we to attain this knowledge? It is no where revealed in scripture, that we individually are thus restored to the favour of God. How is it possible to know it previously to any such change being wrought in us, as may amount to a scriptural evidence of the fact? Or can any thing amount to a scriptural evidence, which does not imply and involve the existence of love to God? Are we to be thus, not only pardoned, but assured of our pardon, while yet impenitent, and destitute of faith in Christ? Or can true repentance, (which necessarily includes hatred of sin, and consequent love of holiness,) and can true faith in Christ exist, without implying love to God?—In short, is there any scriptural way of attaining the knowledge that God loves us individually, with a special and saving love, except by our being brought to love him? or, in other words, by that "new heart and that right spirit being created within us," which are the source of repentance, faith, love, and every grace? Can any thing but *sanctification*, incipient sanctification at least, be the solid and satisfactory proof of our *justification*, or restoration to the divine favour?

It is this error, of supposing that no love to God can exist in our hearts till we first know that God loves us in particular, and with the special love above described, that forms the basis of what I must consider as another delusive and very mis-

chievous notion, that of a *direct witness* of the Spirit, assuring us by ‘an impression from on high, independent,’ at the time, ‘of all fruits,’ because antecedent to them, that our sins are forgiven; which assurance is to precede and produce the love of God, and every thing spiritually good in the soul!—Those who hold such a notion, of a new and distinct revelation communicating the fact to us, (for it amounts to nothing short of this,) are furnished, indeed, with an answer to the questions above proposed, concerning any other method of attaining the knowledge of our acceptance, than that which arises from *the comparison of what is wrought in us, with what is written in the scriptures*: but persons of more sober sentiments must, I conceive, be utterly at a loss for any answer compatible with the sentiment against which the questions are directed.

The text, “We love him because he first loved us,” is often quoted in support of some of the sentiments here opposed: but, even admitting that it speaks of the love of gratitude—of one *reason* of our love to God, rather than of the original *source* of our love to him,¹—it countenances those sentiments in sound only, and not in reality.

REPENTANCE.

ON this subject an important passage has already been given in the course of these extracts;²

¹ See Scott’s Life, p. 338. (347.)

² Above, p. 351.

but that which follows is so far distinct from it, extending or illustrating the views which it presented, that I have thought it also worthy to be preserved in its place.

“The very essence of true repentance is a heart-felt, humbling consciousness of having done wrong; wilfully, totally, inexcusably wrong. If a man be ever so much terrified at the prospect of punishment, or ever so sorry for his conduct merely because it exposes him to suffering, there is nothing of repentance in it; even though he shed abundance of tears, and appear inconsolable, and exclaim ever so vehemently against his own conduct, and make ever so many confessions, or ever so much restitution, or appear ever so much reformed, or cry ever so earnestly for mercy. These things may consist, and have consisted, with an unhumbled impenitent heart; as in the instances of Pharaoh, Ahab, Judas, and others: and then they spring only from self-love.—Suppose a man breaks into my house, and is ransacking my bureaus for my property, and I oppose him, am overpowered by him, and brought into danger of immediate death: in this extremity I may be greatly terrified, sorry that I meddled to my own hurt, curse my rashness and imprudence, and may beg my life with many cries and tears; may promise not to repeat the offence, but to permit him to take what he will without further opposition; yea to tell him where my choicest treasures are, that he may take them: and all this only out of self-love, and to save my life. This may well consist with the bitterest hatred of the ruffian with entire detestation of his injustice,

and determination to revenge my quarrel when I can do it with safety; and with complete approbation also of my own conduct in resisting him, in every point of view but this, that it was imprudent.—Thus may a man feel and act towards God, and yet hate his character, hate his law, hate his conduct in the punishment of sinners, and regard it as tyrannical and cruel; approve of his own conduct, or at best extenuate his fault, cast blame upon God, and applaud and boast of his own virtue.—But true repentance springs from such an apprehension of the justice, holiness, and goodness of the divine character, as shows a man the contrariety of his own: and such a sense of the loveliness of God, in being what he is, as shows him his own unloveliness, yea loathsomeness in being contrary to him: and, in proportion as he approves of, loves, admires, and delights in the divine character, he must needs be disposed to disapprove of and abhor his own.—It springs likewise from that consequent apprehension of the strictness, equity, and reasonableness of the holy law of God, (the copy of the divine excellency,) which makes him sensible of the wrongness of his own conduct; both of the number of his transgressions, and of the malignity and utter odiousness of every sin. In proportion as the law appears good, sin appears bad. In proportion as a man loves the law, he hates sin: as he sees the beauty of the law, he sees the deformity of sin: as he sees the reasonableness of the law, he sees the unreasonableness of sin: and, when he counts *all God's commandments in all things to be right*, he counts his own conduct in all things, of every

sort, in every part of his life, temper, and conduct, as far as it comes short of the perfection of the law, to be wrong. *By the law is the knowledge of sin*: therefore he who is ignorant of the law is proportionably ignorant of sin; and he who sees nothing of the goodness of the law sees nothing of the evil of sin: the *consistent* antinomian therefore sees nothing of the real evil of sin, and cannot possibly truly repent of it: and hence he is driven to maintain that forgiveness *precedes* repentance—in direct contradiction to God's word.—But, as the strictness and excellency of the law are most gloriously displayed in the death of the Son of God, therefore looking unto Christ is the most effectual method of exciting abhorrence of sin, and loathing of ourselves for it. And, as the excellency of the law appears the more clearly, the more we consider the divine perfections, and the obligations which God has conferred upon us; therefore the very same view of things, which assures a believer of his acceptance through Christ, makes him in exact proportion abhor sin and himself for his sins: and, the more sure he is that God loves him, and that Christ died for him, the more poor in spirit, broken in heart, and full of self-abhorrence he is, especially when reviewing former sins, examining his present returns for redeeming love, or confessing any present sin that he has committed.”

SPIRITUAL JUDGMENT AND TASTE.

“ EVERY true believer is made partaker of a spiritual, holy judgment and taste; by which, without a long train of reasoning, he as it were directly relishes or disrelishes certain dispositions and actions, and finds himself delighted or disgusted with them. This is the grand defect in unregenerate men, which is supplied in regeneration. As some persons, having the same mental faculties as their neighbours, are totally destitute of a relish or taste for the beauties of poetry or harmony, or for this or the other science: they take no delight in them, have no relish for them, no taste or judgment about them; but appear totally stupid and insensible to them in the eyes of all who have a relish and taste for them: so it is in all natural men with respect to spiritual things. Only, whereas it is no *duty* to relish poetry, music, sculpture, or painting, and therefore the want of taste for them is no sinful defect, it is the duty of every rational being to love and delight in holiness, to have a taste for it; and no man can be destitute of such a taste without being of a very bad and sinful disposition. . . . Natural men may, by reason and argument, be convinced in their judgment and conscience that holiness is in many things right and reasonable, and sin wrong and unreasonable; but still they have not any love in their hearts to the one, or dislike to the other. They do not perform duty therefore because it is pleasant, sweet, and delightful to them, or avoid sin

because it is odious, irksome, and offensive to them ; but from other motives, and for other ends. But the regenerate man has this defect supplied ; and the principle of divine life, implanted in the soul by the Holy Ghost, operates mainly in this way—if this be not the very *nature* of it. Hence godly men in scripture all speak of it as their experience, to have such a taste and relish for spiritual excellency. They are in raptures with beauties of holiness, and of a holy God. They speak of tasting *sweetness* in God's statutes, *more than in honey and the honey-comb*. The name of Christ is refreshing to this spiritual sense, *as ointment poured forth : his love is better than wine* : praising God affords higher satisfaction to the soul than *marrow and fatness* to the bodily appetite. Innumerable passages in scripture represent this as the experience of believers. Hence it is that they, and they only, find Christ's *yoke easy, and his burden light* ; God's *commandments not grievous* : *wisdom's ways ways of pleasantness* ; *to do God's will, and to finish his work*, (after their Saviour's example,) their *meat and drink*. This is not so much from the present privileges they enjoy, or the reward they hope for, as from the agreeableness of spiritual things to the taste and relish of their souls. They *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, and are *athirst for God, even for the living God*. This is the element in which they live ; and, when they are out of God's ways, they are out of their element, as a fish out of the water, and cannot enjoy pleasure, but are, as it were, in a dying condition. In this sense it is said, that he *who is born of God cannot sin* : for, in exact proportion

as he has a taste for holiness, relishes it, experiences sweetness, and sees beauty in it, he has a distaste, disrelish, and loathing for sin; sees deformity in it, and is disgusted with it."

CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

"THE peculiar object of this spiritual taste is, the beauty and excellency of holy things—God's perfections and law, Christ's character, and his image in his people. Especially the true believer sees a loveliness in every part of Christ's character and conduct. He entirely admires his sweet humility, condescension, meekness, self-denial, zeal, wisdom, gentleness, compassion, and active love; his regard to his Father's honour, rejoicing in his sovereignty, respect for his ordinances, resignation, patience, devotion. All he said, and all he did, appears the perfection of beauty; every temper and every disposition, the matter and the manner of every action, quite what they should be: and he learns to account every thing beautiful or deformed, lovely or odious, in his own and other men's tempers and conduct, as it accords with or is contrary to this perfect copy.—Every true believer is, in some little measure, of this mind and judgment: and none but the true believer is so: and in him it grows exactly as he *grows in grace*.

"This being so, he habituates himself, in some little degree, to judge of every thing by this rule: and thus his *taste is formed*, and he insensibly relishes and finds pleasure in those things and persons who have this beauty in them, and in pro-

portion as they have more or less of it. On the contrary he disrelishes, and is pained and uneasy with those persons and things which are unlike Christ, and that in proportion to their unlikeness to him. And thus also he finds sweetness and pleasure in keeping God's commandments, in imitating Christ's example, in attending God's ordinances, in reading, praying, hearing, meditation, watching, and doing good. He *loves the brethren*, and takes delight in their society: and, on the contrary, finds pain and uneasiness in ungodly company, in neglect of duty, in levity, and in wrong tempers. And this becomes *natural* to him, so far as grace prevails, and is for that reason habitual and abiding: but no obedience that is not pleasant, natural, unforced, will last: and therefore no other religion than this can be relied upon to continue to the end, in all circumstances and against all temptations. . . .

“It is by implanting and maintaining this holy taste, and rendering it quick and vigorous, that the Holy Spirit leads the children of God, and makes them wise to know, and willing to do their duty: and enables them to act decidedly, in a thousand instances of daily occurrence, as they ought to act, without requiring time to deliberate at every step about their conduct, or to produce express precept for it. Their judgment is formed upon the word, and is made by it; but the holy relish they have for spiritual excellency, and disrelish for the contrary, makes those, *who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil,*¹ at first thought to perceive a beauty or defor-

¹ Heb. v. 14.

mity in this or the other temper or conduct, respecting which others may hesitate, as *the ear trieth sounds, and the mouth tasteth meats.*"

ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

"EVERY true believer, in proportion to the degree of his spiritual knowledge, and faith, has the glory of God at heart. The discoveries he has made, under the teaching of God's word and Spirit, of the infinite loveliness and glory of the divine character, as they influence his own mind to admire, adore, love, and delight in God, and to find unspeakable sweetness in this ; so they convince him how right and reasonable it is in itself, and how much it is for their happiness that others should do the same. He is deeply sensible that God's excellencies are worthy to be manifested ; that the manifestation of them, and their glory, was an end worthy to be proposed by God in all his works, as the last end, to which all others should be subordinated. The display of these glorious excellencies, in the works of creation, providence, government, and redemption, is so bright, that he both grieves and wonders that so many rational creatures are blind to it. The whole appears worthy of universal attention, admiration, love, and adoring praise. He sees that this is no more than God's due ; and that all who do not pay it rob him of his due. He would therefore most gladly, if he could, have all rational creatures to know and love, to worship, and obey,

and delight in God, and give him *the glory due unto his name*. He is entirely willing that God should reign : yea he rejoices in his sovereignty ; is satisfied that the throne belongs to him, and delights to think that it is eternally secured to him ; that he is unchangeably glorious and blessed ; that he is infinitely removed from the reach of all his enemies, that they are all in his hand, and absolutely in his power, and shall be put under his feet ; that *his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure* ; that all shall be as he would have it, and shall issue in his glory. But he cannot but be grieved that at present such multitudes are ignorant of him ; in rebellion and enmity against him ; disobeying him ; blaspheming him ; worshipping idols, or idolizing themselves, and the creatures of his hand ; framing false notions of him ; serving Satan ; living in infidelity, atheism, profaneness, superstition, formality, false religion, wild enthusiasm ; hardened in opposition to, or abuse of his truth : Satan practising and prospering ; his instruments successful and honoured ; God's servants, friends, and truths despised, hated, and persecuted. It grieves him at the heart to see things in this state : even as a dutiful and affectionate child is grieved to hear his good father insulted, reproached, calumniated, derided ; or to see him robbed, wounded, and abused ; and the more so because he cannot help it. It is *as a sword in his bones while they daily say unto him, Where is thy God ?*

“ There is much of *the spirit of adoption* in this. Just so far as we can heartily pray, *Hallowed be thy name ; thy kingdom come ; thy will*

be done on earth as it is in heaven ; we have a right to conclude that God is our father. It is the earnest desire and hearty prayer of every child of God, that God's cause and honour on earth may prosper ; that his name may be known, loved, and adored ; that his kingdom may be set up, and fill the whole earth ; that all men in the world may be cured of their ignorance, irreligion, and wickedness ; may return to God through Christ, truly repenting and believing, and may glorify God in body and spirit, with their substance and their all, and do his will as angels do. All such characters long to see God glorify all his perfections by bringing this to pass ; as we are taught to hope and expect that he will do. They rejoice therefore when ministers are sent forth furnished for their work ; when religion revives ; when sinners are converted ; when believers stand fast in the Lord ; and the cause of God prospers. These are objects near their heart.

“ Every true believer, however weak, has somewhat of this spirit ; and that in proportion to his faith and grace. He that has none of it has no love to God, but is still his enemy, however self-love may produce high affections of another sort. But every such person knows that nothing more prevents this blessed effect, than the unholy lives of false professors, or the misconduct of true Christians. This Satan improves to prejudice men's minds against the gospel ; to furnish sinners with plausible pretences for despising and opposing it ; to help convinced persons to quiet their consciences ; and for many other bad purposes. On the other hand, the sincere believer

is sensible that the consistent, upright, blameless, useful lives of Christians are a great ornament and recommendation of true religion; tend to soften men's prejudices, and win upon their hearts; and are made use of by the Holy Spirit in bringing sinners home to God, through Jesus Christ. He desires therefore *to let his light so shine before men, that they, seeing his good works, may glorify his Father which is in heaven; to bring forth much fruit, that God may be glorified; by well-doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* He is anxious to avoid evil and the *appearance of evil*; and so to do every thing as may best tend to promote the credit of religion and the honour of God. *Whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he would do all to the glory of God.* This is his habitual aim. Whenever he acts contrary to it, he is grieved, ashamed, humbled, and watches more for the time to come; being especially troubled if God's name is dishonoured through him."

GOD OUR PORTION.

"EVERY true believer chooses God as his portion, and expects his happiness from God himself, and not from his gifts, solely or chiefly.—The law of God, commanding us *to love him with all our heart*, requires us to love him supremely, to live to him and his glory, as our great end, and to choose him as our portion, and expect our happiness from him alone. *Thou shalt have none other gods but me.* Whatever possesses the throne in

our heart ; whatever we love more than, or equally with, God ; whatever we seek in preference to God's glory ; whatever we expect our happiness from, or choose for our portion ; that is our god, our idol ; and we give the glory to it, which is due to God alone.—Now men, in their natural state, have no more notion of seeking and finding happiness in God, as their portion, than they have of loving him supremely, and seeking his glory ultimately. They apprehend that the gifts of God can do somewhat towards making them happy ; and therefore they desire, choose, and deify them. The worldling makes a god of his riches, pleasures, and honours. In these he trusts, on these depends, and from them expects his satisfaction. Nor are other descriptions of character a whit better, though their idolatry takes another turn. The moralist, the self-righteous, the self-wise, the enthusiast, each deifies something that is not God. One expects his happiness from his moral virtue ; in which he prides himself ; for which he admires, values, loves himself ; in which he trusts, and on which he dotes. Another does the same by his forms of godliness ; another by his knowledge and clear light ; another by his experiences, discoveries, consolations, and attainments. Each takes the gift, and puts it in the place of the giver ; and reposes that dependence upon it, cherishes that expectation from it, and delights himself in contemplating it in that manner, in which he ought to love, depend on, expect from, and delight in contemplating the glorious God : or rather, dressing up himself in this imagined finery, he admires, trusts in, loves, and rejoices in him-

self, and is his own idol. Even in his views of heaven, his soul rests in the expectation of happiness in something which is to be conferred upon him as his own, rather than in God. And thus all agree in *forsaking the fountain of living waters, and hewing out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns which can hold no water.*

“ But the word of God, though it figuratively describes the happiness of the righteous under images taken from natural good things, yet affords light enough to the humble Christian for the interpretation of the figure, and plainly enough declares that true happiness is not to be found in God’s gifts, but in God himself, the fountain from which all these streams flow, and to which they lead the renewed mind. *The pure in heart shall SEE GOD. Without holiness no man shall SEE THE LORD. We shall SEE HIM as he is, and be made like him. We shall behold his glory.* True believers are all represented as choosing God for *their portion ; thirsting after God ; longing to appear in the presence of God ; desiring the light of his countenance ; rejoicing in God ; exclaiming, Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee.* And indeed nothing can be plainer, than that the all-sufficient and eternal God, of unchangeable excellency, is the only happiness which is large enough to satisfy the vast capacities of an immortal spirit. He is the fountain ever full, ever overflowing, inexhaustible, and, if I may so speak, undiminishable, from which millions of worlds, continually drinking full draughts of bliss, never in the least lessen it : but all creatures are utterly

incapable of affording happiness. Let a rational being have the whole world, not earth only but heaven, and every thing in it, and eternal duration secured, in which to enjoy it; and no positive evil to disturb that enjoyment; he would still be a dissatisfied and discontented creature, if not admitted to behold the glory, and taste the love, and enjoy the presence of the great and glorious God. This, and this alone, can fill, and satisfy, and enlarge, and exalt, and make happy the rational soul for ever. I doubt not that every true believer, every *spiritual* man sees, yea feels this: and, however rational it is in itself, I am persuaded none beside can perceive it. He is happy and joyful in proportion as he can have fixed views of the divine glory, a realizing sense of the divine presence, and that kind of assurance of the love of God, which arises from a heartfelt conscious love to him. While he can thus feel *the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost*, he is happy, and can rejoice, even though in tribulation: without it, his soul is dark, dreary, uncomfortable; nor can any worldly advantages, any recollection of past experiences, any hope of future happiness, though it may keep him from distress, make him comfortable, till this experience is renewed.—The view he has of the infinite excellency of God determines his choice of him as his portion. Self-love now takes its proper direction, and cannot be vehement and eager. The enjoyment of God is that *recompense of reward* to which the believer has respect in another world: where, without one intervening cloud, or any remaining coldness or corruption, he trusts to see the glorious God, and

be for ever ravished with his love : and the enjoyment of God, in the *earnests* and *first-fruits* thereof, he longs for as his only solace in this barren land *where no water is*. To see *the beauty of the Lord*, to rejoice in the peculiar manifestations of his glory, is the *one thing which he desires*. Now he knows, both from the word of God and his own experience, that his present enjoyment of this sweet pleasure, and the confirmed hope of it hereafter, increase or decrease in exact proportion to his diligence in watching against sin and following after holiness. He finds sloth and sensuality, worldliness, pride, and wrong tempers, *grieve the Holy Spirit*, unfit his soul for divine exercises, prevent divine communications, make corrections, temptations, and uncomfortable experiences necessary ; and consequently hinder his enjoyment of his beloved. On the contrary he finds diligence and attention to duty prepare his mind for these gracious visits, and render them more frequent and blessed. Every true believer has a little of this experience and judgment, in proportion to his faith and grace : and thereby he will be proportionably induced to follow after holiness."

LOVE TO MAN.

"EVERY true believer has a sincere disinterested love for all men. Nothing can be plainer than that, according to the Bible, the spirit of Christianity is especially a spirit of love to man ; and that, without this, all other attainments, however specious, or even splendid or eminent, are of no

worth to the owner. 1 Cor. xiii.—The whole law is written in the heart of every true Christian; and the two tables are inseparable. *He that loveth God will love his brother also*; and he is a false pretender to the former, who does not the latter: for that removal of pride and selfishness, which makes way for our sincerely loving a God of infinite holiness, who, as such, is directly contrary to our own natural character, will necessarily dispose us to love all men, in submission to his authority, and imitation of his example.

“Now this love, though not confined to, consists much in, universal benevolence and good will to all men, near or far off; strangers and enemies, as well as relatives and friends; and the vilest as well as the best of men.....He who does not forgive his vilest enemies and injurers, and so love the most entire strangers, or the most detestable characters, as sincerely and cordially to desire their welfare and happiness in time and eternity, and disinterestedly to seek to promote it, is not a Christian.—Under the immediate disturbance of mind which a recent provocation excites, a true Christian may, and will feel more or less resentment and ill will: and he may afterwards, through remaining depravity, show some measure of coldness and dislike to persons who have behaved ill, and express it by withholding favours formerly conferred, or still conferred upon others. This, though it generally proves a person to be an unthriving Christian, does not always prove that he is no Christian. But he who habitually harbours so much resentment of injuries received, however great, as to be utterly destitute

of benevolent love to the author of them ; to have no disposition and desire to seek his good, spiritual and temporal ; who can see him pinched with hunger, and feel no willingness to feed him ; or thirsty, and have no disposition to give him drink ; or going on in the way to perdition, and feel no desire in his heart for his salvation, or no willingness to use means for that end ; cannot be a Christian : for he has not one spark of the spirit of Christ in him, whatever his knowledge, discoveries, gifts, or experiences may be. If he do not forgive his enemy, God will not forgive him. If he cannot sincerely pray for his enemies, God will not hear his prayers for himself. If he have no willingness to show mercy, he shall have *judgment without mercy*.

“ And, if enemies are all of them the objects of the benevolent good will of every true Christian, in a measure exactly proportioned to his faith and grace, evidently all other men must be so. There is not a man on earth for whom the true Christian, in his retired moments, when he is most himself, communing with God, or meditating on redeeming love, has not a sincere benevolence ; and whom he does not really desire to be happy in time and eternity ; and whose happiness he has not a sincere disposition to promote with a degree of disinterested, self-denying activity proportioned to his degree of grace. He that has no measure of this disposition is no Christian : he that has but little of it is but a poor sort of Christian : he that has much of it is a thriving Christian.—And, as the measure of this disposition in the heart is the standard of our *growth in grace* ; so the measure

of our willingness to part with our interests, advantages, gratification, ease, and credit, and to put ourselves to inconveniences, hardships, losses, in expressing this love, is the standard of the degree of that love. He that has no willingness to part with his money, to deny himself needless gratifications, or to put himself to inconvenience, to show his good will to men, has no love: he loves *in word and in tongue*, not *in deed and in truth*. He that has but little willingness, in proportion to his ability, has but little love: and he that has much willingness, and does much in proportion to his ability, has much love.

“ These things being evidently so, it must be remembered that, though our goodness does not profit God, it does profit man. *My goodness extendeth not unto thee, but to the saints that are in the earth.* An ungodly man will do good works no further than he is himself in some way or other to have the advantage: either in being praised by men, or in receiving returns from men, or in some temporal conveniency, as credit, health, respect, preferment; or in being justified before God; or in having something whereof to boast, and for which to prefer and admire himself, and feed his self-complacency, or keep up his hopes of heaven: because he has no higher principle than self-love. But a godly man, though in a subordinate degree he may feel his mind influenced by some of these motives, yet, having higher principles, even disinterested love to God and man, (which is the very essential difference that true grace makes,) he will do good works not only when some one or other of these inferior motives

induces, but when none of them do, or even when they all (if that were possible,) are on the other side. So that it is impossible that he can be without a motive to do good works, so long as it is impossible that his good works should not glorify God and benefit man."

THE WHOLE GOSPEL DESIGNED TO PROMOTE
HOLINESS.

" THERE is not one doctrine which is not stated in the word of God in connexion with holiness of heart and life. We are *elect through sanctification unto obedience*. Those whom God foreknew he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. He hath chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy.—Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.—We are called out of darkness into his marvellous light, that we should show forth the praises of Him who hath called us: which doubtless must be 'not with our lips only but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to his service, and by walking before him in holiness and righteousness all our days'—as the vigour and ability of one who has been sick, and supposed incurable, is the best commendation of the physician; without

which the most lavish praises of the yet languishing patient will be of little avail.—If we are *through the law dead to the law*, it is *that we might live unto God*. Are we *justified by faith*, so that *there is now no condemnation* for us? We, at the same time, *walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; by the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; become in Christ new creatures; so that old things are passed away, behold, all things become new.*—Are we assured that we are in a safe state, and in the way to salvation? *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*—Do the saints persevere? Yea, *by patient continuance in well-doing, they seek for glory, and honour, and immortality.*

“ Let us diligently attend to, and carefully copy the phraseology of the holy scriptures. Every thing is in them connected with, and made conducive to holy affections, dispositions, and actions. Every thing issues in love to God and man, and in the fruits and effects of such a temper in our words and works.

“ The gospel may be denominated a scheme, formed in God’s infinite wisdom and love, to restore a fallen creature to holiness, in consistency with the rules of the divine government, the honour of the divine law, the glory of God’s holiness and justice, and to the praise of his grace. This is the end, and glory, and loveliness of the gospel. Rob it of this, and you degrade it into the mire. Christ becomes *the minister of sin*: and, *Let us*

sin on that grace may abound, is then the genuine language of the believer. There may be much loveliness in such a gospel to a carnal mind; for it is a carnal gospel, and *similis simili gaudet*.¹

PROMISES AND PRIVILEGES ATTACHED TO
CHARACTERS.

“PROMISES are made and privileges belong to characters, not persons. Seldom or never in the word of God, is any consolation proposed to God’s people or children, otherwise than by some distinguishing mark of their character, by which they differ from all hypocrites.—*All things work together for good*—to whom? to God’s people? yes: but they are such as love God.—*There is no condemnation*—to whom? to believers? yes: but they are such as *walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit*.—*Like as a father pitieth his own children, even so the Lord pitieth*—whom? his children? yes: but this is their character, *those that fear him*. Are they who *walk in darkness, and have no light*, encouraged to *trust in the name of the Lord*, and to *stay upon their God*? yes: but they must be such as *fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant*. This is universally the method of scripture: and well had it been for the souls of men, if it had been always imitated, and consolation never proposed in general terms to the children of God, simply as such, and without any further description; but to persons who are of such a character; have such inward experiences,

¹ ‘Like loves like.’

longing desires, breathings after God and holiness; and from this inward source produce habitually the fruits of edifying conversation and holy conduct. The contrary course has an evident tendency to bolster up the confidence of the presumptuous hypocrite, who, like a greedy dog, devours the children's food, without fear or shame, and, when rebuked for it, is ready to *turn again and rend* the faithful servant of God; while the humble, fearful believer, not daring to think himself a child, for want of having the evidences of it pointed out to him,¹ stands trembling at a distance, and dares not venture to taste a morsel of what all belongs exclusively to him.—Most assuredly this *undistinguishing* way of preaching² is *casting that which is holy unto the dogs*; and, I am deeply convinced, is one of the worst mistakes a preacher can fall into; tending most directly to stupify the consciences and harden the hearts of the ungodly, and *to strengthen their hands that they should not return from their evil way*; and, in proportion, discouraging the heart of the humble, broken, contrite believer. Would we be *as God's mouth*, let us learn to distinguish between *the precious and the vile*.”³

“ THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS CEASING.”

“ LEAVE out the holy character of God, the holy excellence of his law, the holy condemnation to which transgressors are doomed, the holy love-

¹ See Life, p. 650. (668.)
(210, 213, 687.)

² Ibid; pp. 205, 208, 668.

³ Jer. xv. 19.

liness of the Saviour's character, the holy nature of redemption, the holy tendency of Christ's doctrine, and the holy tempers and conduct of all true believers: then dress up a scheme of religion of this unholy sort: represent mankind as in a pitiable condition, rather through misfortune than by crime: speak much of Christ's bleeding love to them, of his agonies in the garden and on the cross; without showing the need or the nature of the satisfaction for sin: speak of his present glory, and of his compassion for poor sinners; of the freeness with which he dispenses pardons; of the privileges which believers enjoy here, and of the happiness and glory reserved for them hereafter: clog this with nothing about regeneration and sanctification, or represent holiness as somewhat else than conformity to the holy character and law of God: and you make up a plausible gospel, calculated to humour the pride, soothe the consciences, engage the hearts, and raise the affections of natural men, who love nobody but themselves. And now no wonder if this gospel (which has nothing in it affronting, offensive, or unpalatable, but is perfectly suited to the carnal unhumbled sinner, and helps him to quiet his conscience, dismiss his fears, and encourage his hopes,) incur no opposition among ignorant persons, who inquire not into the reason of things; meet with a hearty welcome, and make numbers of supposed converts, who live and die as full as they can hold of joy and confidence, without any fears or conflicts. Its success perhaps may cause it to be cried up as 'the only way of preaching for usefulness:' while all discourse concerning the being,

authority, and perfections of God ; concerning the law ; concerning the evil of sin ; and concerning relative duties ; is considered as only ‘ hindering usefulness : ’ and they only are thought to preach the gospel in simplicity, as they ought to do, who preach in this manner. What wonder if, when all the offensive part is left out, the gospel gives no offence ? What wonder if, when it is made suitable to carnal minds, carnal minds fall in love with it ? What wonder if, when it is evidently calculated to fill the unrenewed mind with false confidence and joy, it has this effect ? What wonder if, when the true character of God is unknown, and a false character of him is framed in the fancy,—a God all love and no justice, very fond of *such* believers, as his favourites,—they have very warm affections towards him ? What wonder if, when these persons are of one mind, and admire and extol each other as the only favourites of heaven, they seem to be full of love to one another ? It is not Christ’s holy image in them that they love, but their own image : and again I observe, *Similis simili gaudet*.

“ The doctrines of the gospel would give no offence except to a few deep thinkers, were it not that, when properly stated, they imply the affronting truth, that every person, by sinning against a holy God, and breaking a righteous law, is justly deserving of eternal damnation, be his character in society ever so moral and respectable ; and that we are all polluted and abominable, contrary to God, and loathsome through sin. Suppress this representation, and there is nothing affronting in any remaining doctrine, or offensive to

any person, save to the reasoner, who, seeing so much done without any adequate cause, may scornfully exclaim, *Cui bono?*¹—The bulk of mankind however belong not to the reasoning class, and will ever be ready to adopt any sentiments their teacher may inculcate, which do not alarm their fears, affront their pride, or call them to mortify their lusts: much more such as quiet their fears, soothe their pride, leave their corruptions untouched, and find them an excuse for not subduing them. And, though an outward reformation may generally be necessary, yet for the sake of a quiet conscience, sanguine hopes, and self-complacency, we all know how far men will proceed in this way.

“ I would not give needless offence. Let this matter be weighed according to its importance. Let the word of God be examined impartially. I cannot but avow my fears that Satan has propagated much of this false religion, among many widely different classes of religious professors; and it shines so brightly in the eyes of numbers, who ‘ take all for gold that glitters,’ that, unless the fallacy be detected, it bids fair to be the prevailing religion in many places.—So far however as I can judge, no persons in the world express more acrimony against that sort of religion which strips the sinner of every plea, leaves him self-condemned and self-loathing, as a transgressor of a righteous law, and a rebel against a holy God, at the footstool of sovereign grace; which shows the sinner the absolute need there was of the

¹ What purpose is all this to answer?

death of Christ, the real nature of his satisfaction, the necessity of a total change of heart and life; and demonstrates that all true converts love the holy character and law of God, and are sincerely holy in all manner of conversation: no persons, I say, are more virulent haters, and more resolute opposers, of these views of religion, than those who are so full of the other affections, and of that sort of religion above described: which too plainly shows how things are with them."

PART II.

THE second, or practical, part of the work is grounded upon a passage of scripture which, it is admitted, immediately referred to the apostles, but which, it is contended, may in its measure be applied, by accommodation at least, to all true Christians. Our first extract therefore will be

OBSERVATIONS ON JOHN XV. 16.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

"WE are not to suppose that our Lord intended in these words to intimate that the apostles, or any other true Christians, do not choose him. Verily all true Christians choose him, as their teacher, their Saviour, their Lord, their portion, their all. In comparison with him they despise

wealth, pleasure, honour, ease, health, liberty, friends, relatives, even life itself. Renouncing the world and its friendship, and all prospects of satisfaction from it, they choose Christ as their friend, and portion, and exceeding joy. Renouncing their own wisdom and righteousness, and all for which they once admired and valued themselves, and in which they trusted and gloried, they choose him as their *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption* ; transfer their admiration and love to him ; glory and trust in him alone. *What things were gain to them they have counted loss for Christ ; yea, doubtless, and they count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord.* In every respect they stand prepared to *deny themselves, and take up their cross, and follow Christ.* Without this they know they cannot be his disciples. And though, conscious of their weakness, and of the treachery of their hearts, and of the force of temptation, they often tremble in the prospect of future possible trials, lest they should flinch in the hour of suffering ; yet hitherto, notwithstanding they may have had sharp conflicts, still, when Christ and the world have come in competition, they have been enabled to renounce the world, choose Christ, and embrace the cross. In this way the sincerity of each sincere Christian has been more or less tried ; and they have all parted with every allowed sin, however gainful, pleasant, or customary. Some have offended friends and relatives ; some renounced prospects of preferment or eminence ; some embraced poverty, obscurity, and contempt ; and some ventured all, though

perhaps they have actually lost little : but all, in judgment and determined choice, having *found the pearl of great price*, are willing to *sell all*, and part with all, to purchase it ; and trust in the faithful promise, powerful arm, and gracious heart of their beloved Saviour, to enable them to adhere to their determination in every future trial. Thus the apostles *left all, and followed Christ* : and thus all true Christians *choose* him : and in this sense, except a man despise, hate, and forsake all, he may deceive himself, but he *cannot be Christ's disciple*.

“ But our Lord had here been speaking of a *friendship* actually formed between him and his disciples ; and in this sentence he has respect to the original cause of that friendship. Was it inquired, how it came to pass that a friendship should subsist between one so great, so holy, so glorious, and these persons, who were so mean, so polluted, so sinful ; who once were enemies, though now they are made friends ? Was it asked, with whom the change originated ? Did they first, of their own accord, and without any previous steps taken by him, through their own superior wisdom and goodness, make advances towards this friendship with Him whom the world hated and despised ? or did he first fix his love upon them, when enemies to him, or ignorant of him ; make himself known to them ; declare his willingness to be reconciled, and to receive them as friends ; and, accompanying his call, *Follow me*, with the same power which attended the words, *Lazarus come forth*, influence them to obey the call, to leave all, and follow him ? Was such an inquiry

as this made? then in these words Christ gives the answer to it: *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.* We have now indeed mutually chosen one another, as dear friends: ye are my beloved, and I am your's: but your choice of me is the consequence and effect of my prior choice of you. You now love me, not only because I am and have been kind to you, but because you are acquainted with my character, and know me to be *altogether lovely*: but had I not first loved you, you would never have known or seen my loveliness. *Ye love me, then, but it is because I first loved you.*

“And, as it was thus with the apostles in respect to their union and friendship with Christ—they did not *first* choose him, but he them—so it is with all other true Christians: and I much doubt whether any of them can be unconscious of it in his own experience, whatever doctrinal sentiments he may have espoused. Had not Christ, without any previous advances on their side, *come to seek and save* lost sinners; had he not, having made way for it by his death, *prevented* (anticipated) their desires with his preached gospel; had he not brought the word of salvation to them, even when they were ignorant of it, or prejudiced against it; had he not thus in the external revelation made himself known unto them in the glory and beauty of his character, and the suitability and preciousness of his salvation, and their perishing need of it; and had he not touched their before unwilling hearts with his efficacious grace; never would they have seen any *form or comeliness in him that they should desire him*:

they would never have *chosen him*, or loved him, or received him, if he had not first *chosen them*.—Let him then have all the praise: and let us humbly confess our base enmity and contempt of him; thankfully acknowledge his triumphant grace; and comfortably hope (if we do now choose him,) that, *having loved us, he will love us to the end*.

“There are different ways in which the Lord *chooses* persons in his sovereign wisdom. Some are chosen to fill up offices in his church, who were never *chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*. Thus Saul was chosen to be king, and Judas to be an apostle. And *many shall say in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?* to whom the judge of all shall answer, *I never knew you: depart from me, all ye that work iniquity*. These are awful words! May God help us to weigh and consider them well, lest, *after preaching to others, we ourselves be cast away*. Let none of us trust in gifts, popularity, or even usefulness: but let us examine ourselves whether we be indeed, *in Christ, new creatures*.

“Some again are *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*, and thus to eternal life, who are not appointed to any distinguished office in the church: and some scarcely live to make profession of their faith, or give evidence of

the grace bestowed upon them, ere they are taken to glory.

“ But the persons spoken of in the text were chosen, both to eternal life, and to fill up the most honourable stations in the church. And all who are *chosen unto salvation* are chosen, 1. Unto eternal life: 2. Unto union, fellowship, and friendship with Christ, whereby they obtain their title to the heavenly inheritance, through his righteousness imputed to them; and are *made meet* for that inheritance by his Spirit dwelling in them, and producing there true holiness, or conformity to His image, who is the exemplar of the new creation. And, 3dly, as all such are chosen to be monuments *to the praise of the glory of God's grace* to all eternity in heaven, so most of them are chosen to fill up some station to his glory in this world. Nay probably every individual among them, however late in life he is converted, is chosen, in some way or other, by doing, or suffering, or speaking, to glorify God here upon earth, before his reception to glory in heaven.

“ *And have ordained you.* The word *ordained*, in our language, has a peculiar reference to the ministerial office, and sounds as *exclusively* denoting the appointment of the persons addressed to their apostolical office. Without debating whether the original word must necessarily be understood in that confined meaning, the expression may fairly be applied by accommodation, at least, in a more extensive manner. According to what has been already observed, all who are chosen to salvation are chosen to holiness, which is the

immediate effect of their receiving the Spirit of Christ. Having been *dead in trespasses and sins*, in their unregenerate state, they are by regeneration *quickened*, and made spiritually alive, and become capable of the functions, employments, and pleasures of this divine life now communicated to them. As *a member in particular* of Christ's body,¹ every individual has his proper place and office, which he is required to fill up to the glory of the great Head, and the good of all the members of the body; and is made willing, and qualified by the supply of the Spirit of grace, thus to fill it up, in proportion to the measure of true religion which he has attained. Or, to change the figure, they are all *servants of Jesus Christ*, and each one has his proper work assigned him: they are all *soldiers of Jesus Christ*, and each has his post allotted him. Some are ordained to serve as ministers, some as magistrates, some as heads of families. Some are rich, and are appointed to be the Lord's stewards, *to honour him with their substance*: some, in an inferior situation, are called to serve him, like Dorcas, (a very honourable and useful appointment—may more aspire to it!) by making coats and garments for the poor. Some are required to serve him in poverty, affliction, and obscurity: but each person has his place, which is his proper post and appointment; and the duties of that place, whatever they be, are his proper work, which he must faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully perform for his gracious master.....

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 27.

“ The glory which God intends to himself from his people in this world arises mainly from their honourably filling up their several stations in life ; by which the genuine nature and real tendency of religion are displayed, and it is made to appear honourable and lovely ; and the power, wisdom, justice, holiness, grace, and love of God in this religion, in his people’s conversion, and holy lives and examples, are displayed ; and God appears to be what he is, religion to be what it is, and believers such as they ought to be ; the mouths of opposers are stopped ; aspersions are wiped off ; the attention of men is attracted, their prejudices softened ; and thus others are won upon, and, through God’s blessing, brought into the church.....

“ Let it then be deeply impressed upon each Christian’s mind, that he was not only chosen of the Lord to salvation, and to enjoy all the privileges and comforts of a child of God, in time and eternity ; but was also designed for some service, to fill up some place in the Lord’s house, to his glory and the good of his church ; and is *ordained*, or appointed to the accomplishment of this end. It behoves every one, then, seriously, impartially, and humbly to inquire what is that work which his Lord has given him to do—for he hath given *to every man his work* :¹ what are the duties of his peculiar station : and what his proper way of glorifying God, adorning the gospel, and serving his generation. This, no doubt, is the special instruction of the parables of *the talents* and *the*

¹ Mark xiii. 34.

pounds. Christ does not mean by them, that a diligent improvement of natural abilities or providential gifts can, in any manner or degree, either merit or procure the grace and favour of God; for this would contradict the whole tenour of the scriptures, deny the doctrine of natural depravity, degrade and vilify the law of God, and render unnecessary the merits of Christ, the regeneration of the Spirit, and all the great points of Christian doctrine: but he means that professed believers, such as call themselves his servants, are to evidence their sincerity, and show their faithful love, zeal, and gratitude to him, by a diligent, active, and self-denying improvement of their knowledge, learning, property, influence, authority, time, health, and whatever else God has committed to their stewardship; so as to advance as much as may be the cause of true religion, and the good of mankind: that, the more they do thus lay themselves out for God, from a genuine love to him and their fellow-creatures, the more shall they have of the comfort and assurance of salvation in this world, and the more *exceeding and eternal weight of glory* in the world to come: whilst hypocrites will be detected in their hypocrisy, both in this world and at the day of judgment,¹ by their refusing and neglecting, from sloth, covetousness, pride, and self-indulgence, thus to improve the talents committed to their stewardship.

“It is to be feared that too many lose sight of these things, and do not as they ought to do,

¹ See Matt. xxv, latter part.

attend to these views of religion : do not *let their light so shine before men, that they seeing their good works may glorify their Father which is in heaven* : do not *by well doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men* : do not sufficiently remember the words of Christ,¹ concerning the necessity of faithfulness in present things in order to having *committed to our trust the true riches*.

“ These things some affect to despise as *legal* : but let it be remembered that the self-righteous Pharisees also, *being covetous, derided them*. It is not either being legal or evangelical in our notions that causes us to approve cordially of such passages of scripture, but our being *carnally or spiritually minded*. He who is *carnally minded*, whether his self-deluding dependence be of a legal or an evangelical cast, whether he trust to a form of external duties, or a form of knowledge concerning gospel doctrines, will, on some pretence or other, quarrel with or deride such spiritual precepts, as they discourage his hopes and expose his hypocrisy : but he who is *spiritually minded*, though he knows God, and his law, and himself, too well to build his hopes of heaven on such scanty and imperfect duties, will approve of, and love, and practically enter into the very spirit of these precepts, because he truly loves God and man.—And undoubtedly nothing but this spirit generally prevailing among professors of religion can stop the mouths of gainsayers, and render religion respected and triumphant.

“ Thus hath Christ *ordained* each of us whom

¹ Luke xvi. 10—13.

he hath chosen, *that we may go and bring forth fruit.* This improvement of our talents in the discharge of the duties of our several stations, in a manner that may do credit to religion, is here and elsewhere called *bringing forth fruit*; because it is the end the Lord has in view in sowing the good seed of his word in our hearts; because it is the genuine result of this good seed taking deep root in our judgment and affections; because this attention to the duties of our several stations will ever be proportioned to the degree in which our understandings are informed, our judgments established, and our hearts affected with the truths of God's word; because, if the word of God produce none of this effect, it produces no effect that is valuable, but is as unprofitable to us as seed sown by the way-side, or on a rock, or among thorns; and because this and this alone brings glory to God and benefit to man.

“ Thus the apostles *brought forth fruit.* In order to glorify God, spread the gospel, and be a blessing to mankind, they cheerfully renounced all the interests, gratifications, and conveniences of life: willingly they embraced poverty, reproach, contempt, hardships, and persecutions: they disinterestedly travelled from place to place, at a distance from their own country, and relatives, and friends, amongst strangers, enemies, and persecutors, preaching the despised gospel, which was *to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.* The same gospel they, some of them, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, committed to writing, and bequeathed as an invaluable treasure to all future ages. This their

preaching and writing they adorned by the most blameless and holy lives; commended to the divine blessing by the most fervent prayers; confirmed by willingly enduring all temporal evils for the sake of it; and finally sealed it with their blood—not counting their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

“ Now, though every Christian is not commissioned to preach the gospel; nor required to leave his house and country to travel into foreign regions; nor called to pass through the same measure and kind of *fiery trials*: yet, unless the nature of Christianity is totally changed; unless it has ceased to be true, that *except a man love Christ more than all he cannot be his disciple*; it must follow that every Christian is *to bear fruit* in his own proper place, in the same self-denying, active, diligent, patient, persevering manner as they did—*constrained by the love of Christ to live no longer to himself, but to him that died for him and rose again*.

“ Finally, their fruit was *to remain*. Some interpret these words of their *continuing* to bring forth fruit to the end of their lives: doing it not only at first, but to the last, and at the last most abundantly.¹ And this is very consistent with scripture, though inconsistent with some very strange and mischievous notions of modern times;² of which I shall endeavour to speak in

¹ Rev. ii. 19.

² Perhaps such notions as that it is to be expected that more

another place. But I am inclined rather to understand the words of the *abiding effect* of their fruitfulness. They should bring forth fruit in such abundance, and of so valuable a sort, that, unlike the fruits which are soon ripe, and are soon either consumed or rotten, it should, after having supplied the present generation, be stored and treasured up for posterity, and be a blessing to millions yet unborn, even to the consummation of all things, yea to eternity.—Thus the fruit brought forth by the apostles has remained, and will remain, to the glory of God and the benefit of mankind. And in the same manner, as I shall hereafter show, the fruit borne by every true believer, may, and in some degree does, and will remain to after ages: which I shall endeavour to improve as an incitement and encouragement to abound in these *fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God.*”

The two following topics are noticed in the course of the preceding discussion, but are here presented detached from it.

ON CHOOSING THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

“ It must be admitted that it is allowable, nay a duty, for believers sometimes to change that station in which they were first brought to the knowledge of God: for otherwise it would be still

advanced Christians will have declined from their “ first love,” &c. (Rev. ii. 4.)—See the author’s ‘ Growth in Grace,’ Sect. I, close of the first subdivision: Works, vol. i. pp. 273, &c.

more rare than it is, for men to enter on the work of the ministry with suitable motives and intentions. Yet assuredly this is a step which ought not to be taken lightly ; and which is often taken from very wrong motives, in a very wrong manner, and with very bad consequences.

“ Persons newly converted have generally very warm and flashy affections, which have more of heat than light in them ; and, possessing little humility, experience, and judgment, they are apt, in this season of well-meant, but often misguided zeal, to think their former employments in life almost too trivial to be worth minding : and, having acquired a degree of facility in speaking of divine things, accompanied with a love to the souls of men, and a desire of their salvation, they are very apt to think themselves immediately called to, and qualified for the work of the ministry ; and, overlooking all other ways of glorifying God, serving Christ, and doing good to men, nothing will do but they must leave their former stations, and presently commence preachers : presuming to judge of their own gifts, and their own call, and all from their own feelings. As if to guard against this very evil, St. Paul says, *Not a novice ; lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.* For this vehemency springs in a great measure from spiritual pride, and leads to greater pride : till this pride, fed by popularity at first, issues in some sad fall : or till, popularity failing, the affections flagging, and discouragements taking place, the premature preacher becomes unfit for glorifying God either in a ministerial or a private station.

“ This, I suppose, may be laid down as a general rule, that a new convert, if not previously employed in this work, ought not hastily to leave his former station to engage in it : for this is expressly to contradict the apostle’s rule. Some time ought to intervene, to mature his judgment, enlarge his views, increase his knowledge and experience. Much prayer, meditation, and self-examination as to the leading motives which influence him in this matter, ought certainly to precede. The advice of aged and experienced Christians and ministers ought to be taken, and much deference paid to it. The question of ability for the work should be submitted to the judgment of others than the person himself, qualified and authorized thus to judge : and a clear opening in the providence of God ought to be waited for.— Were these plain rules attended to, while some would be brought forward, humble, judicious, able, and determined ministers of Christ, many, I am persuaded, would on due deliberation judge it their duty to glorify God in a private station ; and a wide-spreading scandal, yea numerous scandals would be prevented.

“ Previously to a sinner’s conversion, he and all circumstances belonging to him, his natural capacity and acquired abilities, his distinguishing disposition, whether more bold or more timid, or however varied, is perfectly known to the Lord. When he is called by divine grace, and a proper direction is given to these preparatory endowments, the great Head of the church furnishes him with that measure of knowledge, utterance, and other gifts which he pleases. And in all this

he has respect to the post which he has assigned him—whether his present station or some other. He knows best for which the person is fitted and designed : and therefore until, in the ways which have been mentioned, he gives intimation of his pleasure that a change should take place, it is the new convert's duty to go on in his present work, however sanguine he may be, and however earnest in his desires to enter upon a new sphere of action. *And he that believeth will not make haste :* he will wait for God, and not run before him.

“ This is a delicate subject : but the observation I have made, of the bad effects of mistaken notions in this matter, influences me tremblingly to venture my judgment in the case ; though probably it may give undesigned offence.—Generally, I am convinced, it is a believer's duty *to abide in the same calling wherein he was called*, (provided it be a lawful one,) and to endeavour to glorify God therein.”¹

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS.

“ THE penitent thief crucified with our Lord (the only scriptural example of dying repentance—an example calculated alike to preclude presumption and despair,) eminently glorified Christ. He justified the blessed Jesus when all condemned him ; acknowledged him to be the Son of God, even while he was hanging upon the cross for declaring himself such ; avowed an unshaken

¹ See the author's later judgment, above pp. 204—210.

faith in him, while even the apostles were staggered ; and committed his departing soul into his hands, judging himself safe and happy if Christ did but *remember him when he came into his kingdom* ; though both were then in dying agonies together.—Still further, he took shame to himself, justified both God and man in his condemnation, openly rebuked his impenitent companion, and even, by implication, reflected upon the whole company of by-standers, as men that *feared not God*, seeing they could so insult the holy and glorious sufferer at his side.—It may be questioned whether any great number of believers ever did more honour to Christ in their whole lives, than this man did in his dying moments !—Thus guarded in the word of God is the possibility of the salvation of a sinner who only begins to repent when near death. Only one instance, and that so distinguished for deep repentance, strong faith, and the proper fruits of repentance and faith, according to the opportunity afforded for them.”

DIVISION OF THE WORK.

THE author now lays down the three following propositions, to be discussed and illustrated in the remainder of his work.

“ I. That every believer is required to glorify God, adorn the gospel, and serve his generation in the exercise of such graces, and the practice of such duties, as are *common* to all stations.

“ II. That he is required to do the same in the practice of all such duties as are *peculiar* to the

station assigned him by God, and to the talents committed to his stewardship.

“ III. That, in so doing, every such character may reasonably hope, that some, both in the present and in future ages, will be the better for his holy and useful life.”

It is only, however, the first of these propositions that he has discussed, or rather “illustrated by an induction of particulars :” and what he has executed even upon this is only a part of what he designed, the manuscript closing in the middle of a sentence.

The following are the particulars which he has adduced.

1. INTEGRITY AND SINCERITY.

“ A CHRISTIAN is called upon by the word of God to observe the great rule, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them* : which, carefully attended to, would produce evident and eminent integrity and sincerity, in word and deed, running through his whole conduct and conversation in the world, marking all his commercial transactions, and giving a weight to his character. Every appearance or suspicion of dissimulation, equivocation, or imposition, of fraud or exorbitancy in profits or advantages, is to be carefully avoided. All should be open and undisguised, courting inquiry, and avoiding darkness or shuffling ; that his character in this respect may be so established, that the better any are acquainted with him, and the longer they have

dealings with him, the more entirely they may depend on his word, and confide in his honesty, even where his interest is deeply concerned.—Even persons making no pretences to religion not unfrequently acquit themselves so punctually in social life, that their word is as good as their bond, and men confide in them without hesitation. And, although it must be allowed that religious people, having more eyes upon them, more *to watch for their halting*, and more who, from prejudice, will be ready to credit idle reports, and put bad constructions upon whatever will admit of it, have more difficulties in this respect to encounter than others have ; yet, having so much more powerful motives and encouragements, and such *exceeding great and precious promises*, both that they shall receive assistance in performing their duty, and that the Lord will make *those ashamed who falsely accuse their good conversation in Christ*, it is very possible for them so to behave themselves in this matter, as, in process of time, nearly *to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*, and to force the very enemies of religion to acknowledge them men of approved and unimpeachable uprightness.—This is the character of the citizen of Zion, that *he sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not*. Truth, righteousness, disinterestedness, contempt of those things for which ungodly men lie, equivocate, dissemble, defraud, and injure one another, are essential to his character. Nor can the true Christian allow himself in any thing inconsistent with this ; though he may inadvertently be be-

trayed into things which are evil, or bear the appearance of evil.

“ On the other hand, *A false weight and unjust balance are an abomination to the Lord.* Every species of falsehood, injustice, oppression, exorbitant profit, *grinding the faces of the poor*, taking advantage of their necessities and dependence, and all other practices of this sort, are clear marks of a selfish, mercenary, carnal heart, and are ever reprobated in God’s word as evidencing the hypocrisy of such professors as are guilty of them. And, until all those whose conduct in these respects is notorious, or even greatly suspicious, be refused the right hand of fellowship by Christians, whatever they may profess, or however they may *make long prayers*, and in many other respects imitate their predecessors the Pharisees of old; and until true Christians are inspired with a holy ambition of recommending religion by eminence in such duties as have been pointed out; it cannot be expected that true religion should be respectable, or flourish. So long as it can with any semblance of truth be said, that accredited professors of religion are as bad to be trusted, as hard at a bargain, as selfish, and as insincere, as irreligious persons generally are, the religion they profess will appear contemptible, and the despisers and opposers of it will think themselves justified. *What, know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?* From such then, Christian, *withdraw thyself*: against such bear thy testimony: with all watchfulness, and diligence, and perseverance, ever *avoiding all appear-*

ance of evil, and providing things honest in the sight of all men, as well as in the sight of God, oppose to them thy upright, punctual, disinterested example.—And, as a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, we should endeavour to purge out from among us those who act unworthily, that we may be a new lump, and keep the feast, not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. When the Achans¹ are put out of the camp, we may hope that the Lord will be with us and prosper us in fighting his battles; but not before. Most certainly an insincere, dissembling, selfish, and fraudulent behaviour is stronger evidence of a man's hypocrisy, than any orthodoxy of sentiment, or narrative of experience, can be of the contrary. The law of God is written in the heart of the true believer, and the second grand precept of that law is, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* But surely he doth not love his neighbour as himself, nor indeed in any measure at all, who makes no conscience of truth and honesty in his dealings, when his interest or conveniency is to be served."

2. BEING HARMLESS AND BLAMELESS.

"A CHRISTIAN is to be an example not only of integrity, but of a harmless and blameless conduct, to prove the sincerity of his profession, and to recommend religion to others. *Do all things*

¹ Joshua vii.

*without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom shine ye, as lights in the world.*¹ Even when we are habitually free from any allowed insincerity or injustice, in word or deed, towards any man, and are exemplary in this respect, we may in other things occasion mischief or uneasiness to others, and give needless offence. But to fulfil the meaning of the divine rule of doing to others as we would have them do to us, we must make it our study to do and speak nothing which may do harm, or cause uneasiness to any one, in his connexions, character, or peace of mind. Not only should a Christian so govern his tongue as not to invent or propagate slanders, but to be as tender of the reputation of others as he would have them to be of his ; and not to speak of the faults of his neighbour, even in words of simple naked truth, without addition, aggravation, or comment, (which is rarely done,) except where the glory of God and the good of others require it—which is comparatively seldom the case. That secret satisfaction, which our envious and malignant nature feels in expatiating on the miscarriages of others, must be daily mortified and opposed ; a guard kept on the door of our lips ; the tongue, that *unruly evil*, that *world of iniquity*, which *sets on fire the whole course of nature*, and *is set on fire of hell*, brought under exact government ; and the whole conduct carefully and watchfully regulated, that we may not do or speak any

¹ Phil. ii. 14, 15.

thing which may disturb the peace of families, cause dissensions among friends or neighbours, widen breaches already made, wound men's characters, interfere with their interests, irritate their tempers, tempt them to sin, make them needlessly uneasy, or tend to set them against the truths or the professors of the gospel. A thousand little things, as they may be thought, when taken apart, here require the strictest attention, and on our attention to them much of the credit of the gospel depends. Let Christ be our example: he never in a single instance gave offence to any man, but where the glory of God required it; nor ever gave any man cause to accuse him as having injured him by word or deed: and he has *left us an example, that we should follow his steps.*

“The character of backbiters, slanderers, tale-bearers, makebates, *busy bodies in other men's matters*, is so branded with infamy in the word of God, that assuredly no true Christian can in his habitual conduct deserve it; but, through ignorance, inadvertence, and other means, perhaps this part of the Christian's character is as generally and lamentably defective as any part whatever. While I write, I feel myself condemned in innumerable particulars by my own conscience; and many, I am persuaded, may do the same while they read. May the Lord humble and pardon us for the past, and stir up us and all Christians to more watchfulness, and tenderness of conscience in these things, in which the honour of religion is so much concerned!”

3. ACTIVE BENEVOLENCE.

“A CHRISTIAN must not only be harmless and blameless, he must positively *adorn the doctrine* he professes, by an universally benevolent and friendly behaviour.—*Now also is the axe laid unto the root of the trees : every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.* Not only those trees which bear poisonous or bad fruit are to be hewn down and burned, but those which bear none. Not only the religious professor who is unjust, fraudulent, dissembling, mischievous, and slanderous, or in any other way allowedly or habitually guilty of outward sin, is to be accounted a hypocrite, and will be found such at the day of judgment; but he also who, though he maintains an inoffensive conduct, and is in no way scandalous, yet produces none of those *fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God*; and which especially consist in doing good to all men for the Lord's sake.

“*God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him* : nor is there any thing that is more the very essence of the Christian spirit, than a kind, friendly, benevolent disposition, cherished upon right principles, and influencing us to cheerful activity in doing good, according to our ability and opportunity.—It was the daily employment of Christ *to go about doing good* : nor was he ever out of his way for this end : wherever he went he found opportunities of show-

ing his friendly and loving disposition towards the bodies and souls of men. Nor was he ever in the least averse to embrace these opportunities. He never permitted personal considerations to interfere: though he were weary; though he needed refreshment; though men interrupted his retirement, and were ever so importunate; though the time were ever so unseasonable, or the circumstances ever so inconvenient; though his enemies were watching to find matter of accusation against him; or though the persons to whom he did good proved ungrateful; still he was ever ready to do good. He would condescend to the meanest, or submit to the hardest services for this purpose. He was ever ready to be any one's servant who desired to employ him in doing good.—And, having in the most self-denying active manner spent his life in doing good, he finished his course on the cross in the exercise of *love which passeth knowledge*. *He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*.—And he is our example, and requires us to love one another, and to do to one another *as he hath done unto us*.

“ Opportunities of exercising this Christ-like disposition can never be wanting to us in this vale of tears, if we look out for them. Our abilities, indeed, must needs be limited: but, *if the Spirit of Christ be in us*, and produce in us *the mind that was in him*, we shall in our measure have the *willing mind* that he had, whether we have much or little in our power. *And, where there is a willing mind, it is accepted, according to what a man hath, and not according to what he*

hath not. If once our minds are brought to the Christian temper, to disregard trouble, inconvenience, and what interferes with our false notion of things being beneath us, with our false delicacy, our love of ease, gratification, interest, the pomp and pride of life, and other things of this kind—and surely, *if our Lord and Master washed our feet, we ought also to wash one another's feet*: if once we learn to love doing good for its own sake, and are made willing to persevere in doing it, in the midst of the unworthiness, perverseness, and ingratitude of men, and notwithstanding all discouragements; a thousand occasions will offer, in our daily converse in life, of testifying these dispositions, and exercising benignity, in words and deeds, towards friends and enemies, relatives, strangers, and all men; of showing a sympathy with them in their afflictions, a satisfaction in their welfare, an attention to their interests and comforts, and a pleasure in serving and obliging them.

“Nor will this be confined to the affluent. The poorest may, in things suited to their condition, evince benevolence and kindness, as well as the rich in things suited to their's. And, though others may not be so much benefited by it in their temporal concerns, yet the little which the poor Christian can do, *of his little*, will as effectually, among those of his own rank, adorn the gospel, soften men's prejudices, conciliate their affections, and glorify God, as the much that the rich can do *of their abundance*.

“This benignant disposition is expressed, not so much in a few particular instances, however

great, as by a series of little indications, all evidently springing from the same principle, and directed to the same end, and giving a certain tincture to a man's whole character.

“The want of this disposition; the appearance of selfishness, and indifference about the welfare and happiness of others, especially if they are not of our own sentiments or party; and the vast preference given to our own ease, convenience, needless gratification, and interest; are much noticed by the enemies of religion; who do not fail to contrast the benevolence and generosity of many who make no professions of piety, with the selfishness and insensibility of many professors: and we know what inferences they draw. Indeed, *it must needs be that offences come, but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh.*—And, though the inferences thus drawn are not fairly deducible from the premises, yet, explain and argue as we may, men will never be convinced, till we *let our light so shine before men that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.*”

4. A MEEK AND FORGIVING TEMPER.

“A CHRISTIAN must further *bring forth fruit* by manifesting a meek and forgiving disposition. *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Learn of me, saith Christ, for I am meek and lowly in heart.*—Be we ever so faithful, upright, harmless, inoffensive, and benevolent in our conduct, we are not in the least to expect that

others will act upon the same principles towards us. We must in this world lay our account with being often requited with ingratitude and contempt, loaded with reproaches and calumnies, and treated with injustice and deceit. Even were we perfect as Christ was perfect; holy, just, faithful, loving, and wise as he was; it would not only not exempt us, but bring upon us from *the children of disobedience*, in whom Satan *worketh*, a double portion of this treatment. Thus it was that the world requited Jesus: and, *if they hated him, they will hate us; if they called him Beelzebub*, we must expect that they will call us the same.

“But mark his conduct under all the load of rude, violent, insidious, contemptuous, cruel usage which he bore from every quarter. *Behold the Lamb of God*—meek, gentle, silent, calm, patient; never expressing anger or resentment; never retorting calumny or reproach; never employing his miraculous power to avenge himself on his enemies: ever ready to forgive, to do good against evil, and to *overcome evil with good*. Behold him meekly meet the traitorous Judas; lovingly heal the ear of Malchus; calmly bear the insolence and cruelty of the brutal soldiers, the still more execrable conduct of his unrighteous judges, and the ungrateful exclamations of the surrounding multitudes. At length he breaks silence: but it is in prayer—*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!* This is the example we are to follow. Thus ought we to bear the ill treatment of mankind: thus to adorn the gospel, and show in our conduct, that those precepts which enjoin us to love our enemies, to bear, and forbear, and

forgive, and follow peace, and do good to all men, are not only, through grace, practicable, but, being practised, are inexpressibly beautiful; both which the men of the world, full of pride, (*whence cometh contention,*) and standing upon a false point of honour, deny. But it is *our honour to pass by a transgression*.—I am inclined to believe, that the divinely beautiful conduct of a dying Saviour was one great instrumental cause, in the hand of God's Spirit, of convincing the thief on the cross that this could be no other than the promised Messiah, who *was led as a lamb to the slaughter*: which issued in his conversion and salvation. Nor can any more effectual means be used of convincing those around us, that we are indeed Christ's followers, and that our's is indeed the true religion, than our studying to imitate this example: whereas nothing more directly leads men into, or fixes them in the contrary sentiment, than the acrimonious, hasty, contentious, and unforgiving spirit shown by too many. Certainly, if an angry, unforgiving, and contentious disposition prevail so far as properly to form part of a man's character, he cannot be a true Christian at all: for, *If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*¹ But every thing is imperfect in the best of men, and, in judging of characters, much allowance must be made, both in this and some other cases, for natural temper and defective views: and therefore we may conclude that some true Christians are very faulty in this respect; yea all, in a degree, have need to be

¹ Matt. vi. 15. xviii. 35.

humbled, to practise more watchfulness, and more to *consider Him who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself.*

“ It is a general rule, that enemies and injuries cannot hurt us, unless they drive us into sin.—Let it not however be forgotten, that meekness does not require or allow us to recede from our judgment, to act contrary to our conscience, or to be afraid of bearing a faithful testimony against sin and error.”

5. INDIFFERENCE TO THE WORLD.

“ THE Christian is called *to walk worthy of God who hath called him unto his kingdom and glory, and to bring forth fruit* ornamental to religion, and consequently honourable to God and profitable to men, by showing indifference and deadness to *the world and the things that are in the world.*

“ *God forbid, saith the apostle, that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* They who profess to depend on, and glory in a crucified Redeemer, must show that their faith has this effect on them, or leave their sincerity suspicious : for a believing view of the cross of Christ, in a scriptural sense, will ever eclipse all created excellency ; and the enlightened soul will see such divine glory and beauty in the character and law of God, in the gospel, and in holiness, as will powerfully attract his heart to them, and draw it off from the world, and thus

produce an indifference about it, proportioned to the measure of the knowledge and faith that he possesses. *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*—Nor ought any man's assurance of salvation to rise higher than the degree in which he evinces this mortified spirit in respect to worldly things.

“It is peculiarly a *conversation becoming the gospel of Christ*, when Christians appear satisfied with the sweet pleasures of communion with God, with the rich inheritance of the children of God, and with the honour and distinction which God has put upon them as such; and show that they have no need to borrow of the world: when, indeed feeding and feasting on *the hidden manna, the bread that cometh down from heaven, the joys unspeakable and glorious*; or when *hungering and thirsting* after these things; they lose their relish for other delights, cheerfully forego them, and keep at a distance from them: when they without reluctance renounce all those vain diversions and amusements in which they formerly indulged: when they *turn away their eyes from beholding vanity*, and learn to mortify *the lust of the eye and the pride of life*; and manifest a becoming contempt of those numerous attractive trifles which the heart of vain man wanders after, though they add nothing to his happiness; when they are indifferent about those things which gratify the sensual appetite; when they can cheerfully leave those who know nothing better to

scramble for preferments, titles, honours, and riches ; and, by a disinterested, unambitious conduct, show that they are inwardly willing to be without these things, and neither value themselves nor admire others on account of them ; but are determined to keep at a distance from the very suspicion of selfishness with respect to them.

“ View here, again, the example of our blessed Saviour, how he lived, and passed through the world, without either possessing, enjoying, coveting, or aspiring after any thing in it ; but willing to be poor, despised, neglected ; to endure hardship and dishonour ; to be amongst men *as he that serveth* ; and to leave all that the world calls great and good to the *men of the world, who have their portion in this life*. And did he in this respect leave us no *example that we should follow his steps* ?

“ And, as was his example, so also were his instructions. *No man can serve two masters : ye cannot serve God and mammon. Take heed and beware of covetousness. How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God ! Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged with—the cares of this life.*

“ Nothing can be more inconsistent with the genius of Christianity ; nothing more contrary to a life of communion with God, and the hopes of eternal glory ; nothing more damping to those divine delights ; and few things more dishonourable to religion, than an apparent anxiety about the things of time and sense. Any thing in our habitual conduct which indicates that we expect our happiness in any degree from the increase of

wealth, from the gratification of our appetites, from worldly splendour and indulgence, is just so far contrary to Christ's example and to the Christian temper, and dishonourable to religion ; and must deduct proportionably from the pleasures of the divine life. The more anxious we are about such things, and the more we indulge in them, the less shall we be favoured with spiritual joy : and, provided it be done in a proper manner, the more indifferent we are about these things, the more shall we be filled with *the peace of God which passeth understanding*.

“ Christians, therefore, are required to glorify God by parting, not only with those things which are sinful in themselves, but with whatever is wrong in its concomitants and consequences ; whether by disinclining us for spiritual exercises, making provision for the flesh, or narrowing our capacity of doing good to all men. He who will grasp at every advantage, and enjoy every indulgence, which is not in itself absolutely sinful, may not be condemned for bearing *corrupt fruit*, but will certainly be condemned for not bearing *good fruit*. He will fall under the sentence of the rich man in Luke xvi, and of the wicked in Matthew xxv ; both of whom are sentenced for sins of omission.—Evidently this is not *denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following Christ*. This is the religion of the thorny ground hearers. *The cares of this life, entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful*.

“ It is to be feared that there is much of this religion in the present day. Many religious professors are as mercenary, as self-indulgent, as ex-

pensive and vain in their apparel and furniture, as luxurious in their manner of living, and as anxious about these things, as the people of the world. Can we really think that these are the true disciples of Jesus, and of the same religion with primitive Christians? that they have renounced the world, have overcome it, are living above it, do not love it, are crucified to it?—In vain will they object to such admonitions as *legal*. I am not treating of justification: on that subject I have avowed my sentiments. I am speaking of the evidences of faith, which such persons do not exhibit.—Nor are these ‘little things.’ If any think them so, let him remember that *hæ nugæ seria ducunt in mala*. These are the things which discredit religion, and open the mouths of opposers, and prevent professed Christians from bringing forth fruit. Many will excuse themselves from feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, or contributing to the support and propagation of the gospel, because they cannot afford it; who will spend twenty times as much upon needless vanities of dress, furniture, and entertainments—which only feed their pride, and expose the carnality of their minds. Is this Christianity? Is this having the law written in our hearts? Is this loving God supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves? Are these trifles? Satan knows they are not, though many of us do not. Will not these things appear, at the day of judgment, stronger evidences against us, than all our talk about doctrines and experiences will for us? Would not Isaiah, and Paul, and Peter, and other apostles, and our Lord himself have borne testi-

mony against them?¹ and shall we then be censured for doing it? Though I am no advocate for monkish austerity, nor for what in the least tends to level the different orders of society, yet I own that the expensiveness of many professors in their dress, table, furniture, and whole style of living,—carried to the utmost extent they can afford, if not beyond it; often interfering with the payment of just debts, still more with feeding and clothing the poor; and always in violation of the precept, *Be not conformed to this world*; makes me ready to conclude that they have either no love, or very little: and, if they have *none*, they are *nothing*, *though they spake with the tongues of men and of angels*.

“ If some lay an undue stress on these things, and put their own strictness in the place of Christ’s righteousness, probably they would have vastly less success in propagating their errors, if others did not lay too little stress upon them: as if it mattered little how a man hoarded and spent his money, how he gratified his pride or luxury, provided he were not a cheat or a drunkard, said he had faith, and learned to talk of experience.

“ I mention these things because persons of all ranks, professing religion, are liable to err here; the poor, as well as the rich, showing themselves not *content with such things as they have*; not satisfied with the pleasures of religion, without worldly things too. And I am earnest upon it, because I am deeply convinced of its importance. It seems to be a breach in our walls, which is suf-

¹ Isa. iii. 1 Tim. ii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. Luke xiv. 12—14.

ferred to be neglected as of little consequence, while Satan does immense mischief by means of it.—Whether we have more or less it is *a talent*, and we must give account of it as stewards ; and the Christian spirit is, to deny ourselves, to deduct from our gains and our expenses, to abridge ourselves of many gratifications, conveniences, and comforts, which are not sinful in themselves, that at one and the same time we may mortify *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*, and provide a fund for works of piety and charity. And what a revenue might be raised even in this land for such purposes, were this conduct universal among those who profess to be governed by the principles of Christianity ! This, I am persuaded was very conducive to the spread of the gospel in the apostles' days. The disinterestedness and public spirit of Christians, who, living in fervent love, had even *all things in common* when circumstances required it, were both the effect and the evidence of their abundant grace, and were instrumental to the glory of God and the good of men. Thus they *brought forth fruit, and their fruit remaineth*. And so doth their example ; though but few are willing to follow it. Nor do I much doubt that the same spirit will be revived amongst believers previously, and as preparatory, to those glorious times which the church is waiting for, when *the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea*. And how worthy is it of our high calling, how becoming the gospel of him who, *though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich*,

to be so dead to outward things, and so filled with love to others, as cheerfully to retrench a needless ornament, to forego a superfluous delicacy, to wear a coarser, cheaper garment, or to keep a plainer table, on purpose to secure a fund for works of piety and charity.—And, *If thou, O Christian, thus draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day : and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought ; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.*

“ As therefore ye abound in other things, see that ye abound in this grace also ; for herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit : so shall ye be my disciples.”

6. CONTENTMENT AND THANKFULNESS.

“ TRUE Christians are required to glorify God and adorn the gospel by a patient, contented, cheerful, thankful spirit in all circumstances and under all dispensations of providence.

“ *Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards.* All these troubles and sorrows, which intermingle with and embitter every relation and situation of life, are the effects of the righteous sentence of God pronounced on our fallen race : for *affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.* Is there evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it ? And indeed, as every thing is so far sinful as it

comes short of the perfection of the law, so every thing inflicted on sinners, short of complete unmixed misery, is not only just but merciful. *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.*

“ But none can or will see and allow this, but they who, being enlightened to behold the infinite glory and loveliness of the divine Being, perceive the reasonableness and equity of the divine law, and in consequence the utter hatefulness of sin, of every kind and degree of sin, which is the transgression of that law ; (*ἀνομία*;) and the righteousness of the curse denounced against every one that *continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them* ; and who in their judgment consider sin as justly deserving God's everlasting wrath, and complete misery in hell. He, therefore, who professes to believe that even perfect obedience merits nothing, being no more than the payment of a just debt, but that every sin deserves unspeakable punishment, is most inconsistent indeed if he indulge impatience and discontent, and give way to murmurs and repinings when he meets with troubles, however complicated and heavy. Still the evils he endures are much less than he deserves, and the good he enjoys is what he has no right to claim. He is called upon, therefore, when the trial comes, to show whether he believes his own professed principles, and is influenced by them.—A true Christian sees it right that the world, being full of sin, should be full of sorrow ; that mankind, having abused, and indeed deified God's creatures, should have them all embittered to them. Especially he sees this in his own case to be fit and right ; and,

although even innocent nature would flinch from suffering, yet he will heartily join with Jeremiah, and say, *Shall a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin?*—And this will produce, in proportion to the degree of grace he possesses, an habitual contentedness in his station, thankfulness for the mercies he enjoys, patience under the sufferings he is visited with, and resignation to the will of God under losses and trials : which will lead him to say with Job, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord :* or with Eli, *It is the Lord ; let him do what seemeth him good :* or with David, *I was dumb with silence, because thou didst it.* And this is in a high degree honourable to God ; to his wisdom, justice, faithfulness, and goodness. It shows the power of religion in the heart ; recommends it to others ; and conciliates the regard of men, who often cannot withhold their approbation, and even admiration, of such conduct.

“ And, although Christians have not only their share in the ordinary troubles of life, but also many troubles peculiar to themselves, yet they have also peculiar supports : and they experience both one and the other for this end, among others, that they may glorify God, evidence the reality of religion, and recommend it to men by their patient, contented, cheerful, thankful conduct under troubles.—*Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth ;* and whom he loves, the world will hate and persecute, and the devil will envy and tempt : and from all these causes they will *in the world have tribulation, and through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.* Their Father sees it

good for them to be crossed and disappointed, to be despised and reproached, to be persecuted, tried, and tempted, to be poor, or sick, or bereaved ; that they may be weaned from the world, driven from amongst the ungodly, brought near to him in prayer, made acquainted with his word, have experience of his faithfulness, be corrected for their sins, taught to sympathize with others, and led to admire the love of a willingly suffering Saviour. They shall have grievous chastisements, that they *may be partakers of his holiness.*

“ And much of the *fruitfulness*, which our heavenly Father requires of us, consists in our properly conducting ourselves in these circumstances. He hath therefore set before us a perfect example in his beloved Son, that under all we may look to him, *lest we be weary, and faint in our minds.* He hath also given unto us *exceeding great and precious promises*, peculiarly to an afflicted state ; and is ever ready to fulfil them to us in answer to our prayers. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* Having convinced us that the worst we endure is immensely better than we deserve, he holds forth to us the assurance that *all things work together for good to them that love God* ; he affords the comforting influences of his Holy Spirit, and refreshes our souls with the invigorating hope of eternal happiness—that *our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Now then he bids us *be content with such things as we have ; be patient in tribulation ; possess our souls in patience ; rejoice in the Lord always ; yea glory in*

tribulations also. And he who most habitually and eminently obeys these precepts does most honour God, adorn the gospel, and let his light shine before men: and all true Christians will be disposed to do so in proportion to the degree of grace which they possess, except as its efficacy may be restrained by erroneous views.

“The grand difficulty which sincere Christians find in these duties proceeds from remaining sinfulness, and the doubts thence arising about their state. This can be removed only by carefully examining the word of God, in order to discover what is the real nature of true grace, and how it influences the heart; carefully comparing with this what we have experienced, and do experience; praying much and earnestly to be satisfied in this matter; and especially *giving diligence to make our calling and election sure.*—However, did not many strangely confound a complaining, desponding, gloomy spirit with true humility, they would by no means yield to it so much as they do. Did they consider how it prejudices men’s minds against religion, as an uncomfortable thing, they would watch more against it, and complain to the Lord, and not to man. And, did they duly consider what their deservings are, and what their mercies; and how able and willing Christ is to save sinners, though they might not be able to *rejoice evermore*, yet they would not dishonour religion by appearing always dissatisfied and discontented.—On the contrary, for a professed Christian cheerfully, patiently, contentedly, thankfully to bear poverty, pain, sickness, reproaches,

contempt, and injury ; under all praising the wisdom, justice, goodness, faithfulness of God ; still recommending him to all around as a good master and a kind father ; and expressing himself satisfied in religion, desiring no other portion than God, glorying in this choice of him, and rejoicing in the hope of heaven ; this is so powerful an argument for the reality and excellency of religion, as can scarcely be totally withstood. This alone has been instrumental to the salvation of multitudes ; and so great has been its effect, that times of persecution have ever been noted as times of great success to religion.—May God help us thus to glorify him !”

7. OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS ORDINANCES.

“ CHRISTIANS are called to glorify God, and to promote the cause of religion and the salvation of men, by a reverent regard to all religious institutions.—Thus Zacharias and Elizabeth, who were *both righteous before God, walked in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord, blameless* : yea thus our Lord declared that *it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*. I do not find that he any where speaks of himself singly in the plural number, nor conceive that we are to interpret this answer to John the Baptist otherwise than in this manner : ‘ It becomes *all* the servants of God to put honour on all his appointments, even respecting instituted worship, by attending upon them : much more does it become *me*, who, as the

surety for sinners, as well as their example, am *to magnify the law, and make it honourable*, by a perfect obedience.'

"There are two things to be considered in all public ordinances of religion: they are means of grace, channels, as it were, through which divine blessings are communicated from Christ to those who sincerely and diligently use them; and they are also appointments intended to keep up the knowledge of the true God, and regard for religion in the world. Every religious ordinance, in general, when seriously and reverently attended on, is of the nature of a confession of our faith in the being and perfections, the authority and government of the true God; and forms a protest against atheism, idolatry, and irreligion: and each ordinance, in particular, having its own specific meaning, gives the Christian an opportunity of professing his faith in some particular part of divine truth, and protesting against the opposite error.

"Thus bloody sacrifices, made by fire to Jehovah at his appointed altar, were a profession of faith in him as the true God; that the worshippers were sinners; that sin deserved death, and the fire of the divine wrath; that, if the sinner were spared, a substitution must be made; that *without shedding of blood*, and a sacrifice to divine justice, *there was no remission*; and that the offerers expected one, *in the fulness of time*, who should do that really which these sacrifices could do only typically. The persons therefore who presented a sacrifice protested against atheists, idolaters, irreligious persons, and self-justifiers.—Thus, again, circumcision was a confession of depravity as de-

rived by natural generation from Adam, a brand of guilt on our fallen nature, an acknowledgment that the old nature must be put off by *the circumcision of the heart to love God*; and that such sinners could not be justified but by *the righteousness of faith*, of which circumcision was *the seal*. All in covenant with God must have this seal; for without righteousness imputed, through faith, and the change of heart by the Holy Spirit, none of Adam's race can be taken into covenant with God. *We are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*—Baptism under the new testament professes all the same truths, together with the doctrine of the Trinity. And this appears to me a strong recommendation of infant-baptism, which powerfully tends to keep up the knowledge and belief of these great truths in the world; is a protest entered against all opposite doctrines; is therefore of use to the church at large, whether it be to the infants themselves or not—though it surely is as likely to be so as circumcision to the Jewish infants; puts honour on God and Christ; and therefore answers the end of a divine institution.—And thus also does the Lord's supper most explicitly declare many most important doctrines, and protest against many delusions. And, though numbers, both among professed Jews formerly, and now among professed Christians, mistook the intention of their own ordinances, and attended on them in formality, hypocrisy, and self-righteous pride; still they were and are fitted to answer the end for which they were appointed; [and whenever any reformer has

arisen, this has given him great advantage in pointing out and enforcing the truths implied in them ;] and a great part of our confession of Christ, which he requires of us, consists in a stated, serious, and reverent attendance upon them, accompanied with an explicit avowal of our intention in so doing.—This was what Jesus did when on earth. Being no sinner, he was incapable of the thing primarily intended in the ordinances he attended on ; nor did he need them as means of grace, in the manner sinners do. Neither born in sin nor a sinner by practice, he needed not the circumcision of the heart, nor any atoning offerings : and *of the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins* he was incapable in its primary meaning. And the temple service, the passover, and other observances may be considered in the same light. But, as they were appointments of God, he submitted to his authority in them : as they were confessions of faith, he bore testimony in them for the truth, and against error : as they were acts of worship, he honoured God in joining in them. And in so doing he is not only our righteousness but our example.—Nor ought it to be overlooked, that he is a standing example in proof that those may, and in some cases ought, to join in divine ordinances, who are incapable of *some* of the ends of the institution. *He* was baptized with the baptism of repentance, who was incapable of repenting.

“ I cannot but be astonished, that so many Christians should consider these things as matters of indifference : and that, because a man may be saved without being baptized or receiving the

Lord's supper, they should conclude that using these ordinances may be treated as a matter of mere discretion.¹ Doubtless all commands of God are binding on all to whom they are given: and the moral law requires obedience to all institutions of a ceremonial nature so long as they are in force: yea the first sin was the breach of an appointment originally indifferent, but made binding by a divine command. Although a man may be saved, who for want of opportunity complies not with a divine institution, or even who ignorantly and erroneously neglects it; yet the slothful or presumptuous neglect of it is equally sinful with the like neglect of any other duty, and as much requires to be repented of; being a refusal to submit to God's authority, a contempt of the divine wisdom and goodness in the appointment, the forbearing to make a required confession of Christ and his truth, and to worship God in his own prescribed manner: and he who does thus neglect presumptuously, slothfully, for fear of men, or from any motive of this kind, has little scriptural reason to conclude himself a believer. Nay he who from diffidence, unwarranted suspicion, or any like cause omits a divine ordinance, would do well to consider

¹ There is scarcely an error more prevalent, or one which is employed with greater effect in the present day, than one nearly allied to that which is here censured. Various denominations of Christians all agree in the *essentials*: therefore it is of *no consequence* to which we attach ourselves. That is, if any thing is not essential to salvation it is of no importance, at least of no material importance, at all! If a man has but a head and a heart, his wanting a leg, an arm, or an eye, is a matter of no moment!

the ingratitude and folly of his conduct, and how he not only neglects a means of grace, but refuses God the glory due unto his name.

“ First of all, every one should inquire what ordinances are now, under the Christian dispensation in force, and what abrogated which once were obligatory. Each one in these things must judge for himself; and, seeking God’s teaching, after due deliberation be satisfied in his own mind, and not rashly judge those who differ from him. Then the manner of the administration of any ordinance should be considered, and the persons whose duty it is to attend upon it. And we should not merely ask, What good may I get by it? which thus exclusively put is a selfish question; but also, Is it my duty? What glory may redound to God from it? what advantage to the truth? what good to men? And certainly the regular and serious attendance on all public ordinances, and the reverential regard paid to all religious institutions, are exceedingly honourable to God, commendatory of true religion, and profitable to others, as an example of godliness, a reproof of ungodliness, and a profession of the truth: and, on the other hand, the neglect, and disregard, and disrespect shown by many religious professors to the public duties of instituted worship, are exceedingly dishonourable to God, reproachful to religion, and hurtful to the souls of men.

“ Let then that professor of religion who would *bring forth fruit* to the glory of God, the ornament of religion, and the good of souls, make a conscience of such things as these. Let him care-

fully and seriously sanctify the Lord's day, as set apart especially for the delightful exercises of religion. Let him show that religion is delightful to him, by cheerfully detaching himself on that day, as much as possible, from worldly cares, employments, company, and conversation; banishing sloth, self-indulgence, and levity; carefully redeeming his time, and diligently employing it in the secret, social, and public duties of religion. Let him be constant and early at the place of public worship: not admitting any excuse, either for wholly absenting himself, or for coming even a minute too late, which he cannot confidently urge at the day of judgment. Nothing is more grieving to my mind than the procrastination so common in this latter respect among persons professing godliness, of every denomination. It is certainly very dishonourable to God whom we worship, and very irreverent, and a very bad example to others, for such persons to be constantly, or frequently, or without sufficient reason, too late at the place of worship; to the interruption of others, and often (I speak feelingly,) of him who leads the worship. Undoubtedly there are cases in which it is unavoidable: the state of some persons' health, the necessary incumbrances of families, and other things, require allowances: but that it is so common, and almost general, and often most remarkable among persons professing to be religious, arises, it is to be feared, from other causes. Indulged sloth on the Lord's day morning; indulged disinclination to public worship—which, though the more spiritual and important part of the business for which we assemble, is not

so well calculated, by means of novelty, as the sermon may be, to keep awake attention in a mind either totally or prevailingly carnal ; if not sometimes contempt of the duty itself : these things and such as these too often, it is to be feared, have an influence in this matter which is very awful. But let that Christian who would adorn the gospel beg of God a spiritual mind, that he may delight in public worship ; rise early on the Lord's day, according to his necessary avocations, that other things may be done with, and he may be at leisure to attend at the appointed time punctually ; that he may not only have benefit himself, but honour God in the whole of his public ordinances, and not interrupt, but promote the devotion of others, and especially that of his minister. There is nothing that with me tends so much to make our public worship formal, as the continual interruption which arises from persons coming in after the service is begun.

“ Let one who would thus glorify God not only collect his own mind in remembrance of the glory of the Object of his worship, but express his reverence by a solemn serious gesture and posture, whether kneeling or standing. Surely religious professors in our day are so afraid of formality, that they are running into the opposite extreme. Can it be for the glory of God, the credit of religion, and the edification of others, for such persons to be irreverent in public worship, some in one posture, some in another, with vacant countenances, and inattentive looks ; or more attentive to those who are coming in, than to what they are professedly doing. I have often been shocked at

the appearance of a worshipping congregation in this respect. Let every true Christian, therefore, for the honour of God and the credit of the gospel, protest against such conduct by a reverent behaviour.

“ Let every such person too, as soon as he is satisfied that his dependence is on God’s mercy through the atonement of Jesus Christ, and that he desires by God’s grace to live to his glory, make public profession of his faith, submit to Christ’s authority, thankfully remember his dying love, and join himself in communion with his people at the Lord’s table. And, though he be not always alike comfortable there, yet let him be constant in this attendance as long as he lives, making a point not to absent himself without absolute necessity ; for excuses will ever be multiplying upon him : and, so long as he is conscious that he comes in submission to Christ’s authority, and with desire of his blessing, though humbled, let him not be discouraged if he do not always find *sensible* benefit therein : for what is honourable to the Lord must in the issue be good for our souls.”

8. ZEAL FOR RELIGION.

“ CHRISTIANS in general are required to glorify God and do good by a prudent zeal in endeavouring to bring others to receive and obey the blessed gospel, both by their own edifying conversation or correspondence, by bringing them to hear faithful preaching, or by any other means which God

has put in their power, and which consists with the relative duties of their station.—Much prudence is allowed to be requisite in this matter, and many mistakes are made by those whose zeal outruns their discretion, experience, or humility; and young converts often thus hurt the cause they would promote. But I believe the Lord does vastly more approve, and will much more bless, even their imprudent zeal, than the lukewarmness and indifference of many who censure them : which is loathsome and abominable to him. A young zealous Christian will be sure to meet with so many mortifications and disappointments as will abate his too warm zeal, and probably he will not be long before he gets into the opposite extreme. But, if his heart be right with God, and true religion abounds in his soul, his love to God and man increasing, while he is continually asking and receiving from God true wisdom, he will daily gain experience and humility, will advance in the knowledge of his own heart, of human nature, and of Satan's devices ; and, having a more single eye to God's glory, and a more simple dependence on his direction and blessing, in all he does, he will learn to confine himself to his own sphere, and to use such means only as are consistent with his other duties : and in this manner, without assuming what does not belong to him, or leaving his proper calling, or intruding into the ministerial office, his zeal and earnestness may be very useful.—I think many ministers have some persons who greatly strengthen their hands, and whom they will acknowledge as *fellow helpers* with them in the gospel ; though they never in

the least quit their character as laymen, never attempt to preach, nor in the least encroach on the ministerial office, or neglect their proper calling. But every person, however poor and obscure, has relations, connexions, acquaintance : a pious book put into the hands of one, a letter written to another, a word of reproof, warning, direction, or instruction to another, as opportunity offers, if weight be added to it by friendly offices, and a good example, may be the blessed means of doing good. *A word spoken in due season, how good is it !* How good it is, cannot be expressed.—Especially when persons are sick and under affliction ; at some of those many times which there are, the *mollia tempora fandi*, when the mind, as it were, lies open, and invites us to speak ; the same things may be spoken without offence, which at other times would excite contempt and indignation. Then to speak a suitable word, or to recommend persons to send for some pious minister, may be the means of incalculable good.—At other times we may induce them to hear the word of God. *Come and let us go up unto the house of the Lord !*—In such ways prudent zeal and persevering endeavours will certainly be blessed : and, though we should fail in a thousand instances, and at length succeed in only one, would not that one amply recompense a true Christian for all his labour ? Thus, when Andrew found Christ he used his influence with his brother Peter : and Philip did the same with Nathanael. *Come and see*, said he : and Nathanael came, and saw, and believed. Thus also the woman of Samaria addressed her fellow citizens, *Come, see a*

man which told me all things that ever I did: and we know the blessed effect.—Thus the mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment: his lips disperse knowledge, and his mouth will be a well-spring of life. This is that improvement which we ought to make of the gift of speech and utterance, according to our ability, when, through divine grace, the members of our body become instruments of righteousness unto God: and thus employed our tongue would indeed be, as the Psalmist calls it, our glory.—We know how this little member, being set on fire of hell, setteth on fire the whole course of nature, and doth infinite mischief in the world, especially in promoting profaneness, infidelity, and false religion: but were it set on fire, as it were, of heaven; were our hearts filled with the fire of divine zeal and love; it might be in some measure a proportionable instrument of communicating the holy flame to the hearts of others, and propagating true religion in the world.

“ But he who would thus glorify God and serve his generation, must not be a mere talker: his conduct must be truly Christian, or he will do much mischief. He must be much in prayer for wisdom, much in meditation, and watchful against spiritual pride: and he must cultivate and manifest a meek, disinterested, benevolent spirit. Men will never believe that we really intend the good of their souls, if they do not find that we endeavour to do them good disinterestedly in temporal things.—Finally, let me recommend to truly zealous Christians this caution: Not to *reprove* any person for such things as his conscience does not in

some measure condemn, but ever to begin with things confessedly wrong. A man will fall under reproof for swearing, taking God's name in vain, lying, and other evils of the like kind, who would rage or scoff if you found fault with him for frequenting some diversion' * * * *

*To a Gentleman.*ON UNREASONABLE REASONINGS—AND ON THE
LOVE OF GOD.

“DEAR SIR,

Aston Sandford,
Sept. 4, 1803.

“Since I received your’s, I have had many things, not only to occupy my time, but so far to interest my feelings, as to unfit me for duly writing on the difficult subjects concerning which you wish for my sentiments.—As to the *last* particular, I refer you to Mr. Locke. I exist, *ergo* my Creator exists. The house exists, and some one built it; *ergo* the builder existed. He that is not satisfied with this *demonstration* will never be satisfied in a way of argument. I could read Dr. Clarke and other writers of that cast, till I was a sceptic: but, if I see a cottage, I never think it was self-created, or made by chance, or existed by necessity, or has existed from eternity; I am sure, quite sure, it was made by intelligent agents: and the external creation, and the existence of my own body and soul, all showing such evidently wise contrivance, render it infinitely more absurd to think that they existed without an intelligent author.

“My dear Sir, I see clearly that you are too prone to reason, and too backward to believe. Two hours’ earnest prayer (upon the *reasonable* supposition of a God “that heareth prayer,”) to be satisfied on that point, would have done more

good than two years' seeking the demonstration you speak of. He that will not act till he can demonstrate, that it is impossible such and such things should not be true, will never more eat, or walk, or buy, or sell.—I believe the existence of God to be demonstrated in the best possible way by the existence of his works : but, were it only highly *probable*, considering the shortness and importance of life, this affords sufficient ground to act on, even as if it were demonstration.

“ I begin with this first, because I fear it is the cause of your other difficulties. Allow that there is such a thing as moral demonstration, as distinct from mathematical, (and what judge ever thought of trying causes by mathematics ?) then I am confident the Bible is proved by testimony, the testimony of men and of God himself,¹ to be divinely inspired. Now, shall we teach God, or he us ? Do we know God any further than he has revealed himself ? *Canst thou by searching find out God ? Except ye receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ye shall in no wise enter therein.* If the Bible be divinely inspired, every part of it is true : and it is the highest exercise of *reason* to *believe* what God says, however contrary his declarations may be to my reasonings : for they cannot be contrary to truth and reason. I may be mistaken, God cannot. He is the teacher, I the scholar. ‘ But,’ says the scholar, ‘ I cannot comprehend it, and answer all objections to it.’ Let the parent, the schoolmaster, the tutor, the lecturer in the university, answer this. How would you answer

¹ Heb. ii. 4.

it to the young persons under your care? You would say, ‘ You must give me credit for it : you are young and uninformed : at your age I might have thought so too. Why am I to teach you, if I do not know better than you? When you have learned more, you will understand that which you now cannot. The objections will vanish : but you are not capable of receiving and making a proper use of the explanations and reasonings, which a few years hence, if you be teachable, will be quite easy to you.’—My dear Sir, the wisest of us is a mere child in heavenly things. But *vain man would be wise* ; though an apostle has said, *If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.*

“ Man is generally allowed to be *body, soul, and spirit* ; yet these three are one. Explanations and illustrations only darken the subject [of the Trinity]. Divine perfections and operations are ascribed in scripture to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit : yet there is but one God. If I believe the scriptures to be the word of God, I must believe that these are three *in one sense*, and one *in another*—three Persons and one Deity.—Either the Bible is not the word of God ; or this doctrine is not contained in it ; or it must be consistent, though incomprehensible. I have said a little on it in my Essays ; and I am not disposed to add

‘ Where reason fails
With all her powers,
There faith prevails,
And love adores.’

—I trust I have natural powers for reasoning ; and I am sure I am prone enough to it : but on such subjects the *ipse dixit* of my [Divine] teacher is every thing ; the way of believing, not of reasoning : and, if you do not find this satisfactory, I wish you to inquire the cause.

I have this day preached upon the subject of your *first* inquiry ; that I might try to understand it, before I attempted to write about it : and I thank you for the topic : I trust it has given occasion to an useful discourse on 1 John v. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, &c.* The love of men, of sinners, to God must be the effect of regeneration : for, as born in sin, and carnal, we are *enmity against God*. It is the effect of *reconciliation* : it is *by faith*, and is exercised in proportion to our faith. It is the *love of Christ*, or love to the discovery of the glory of the perfections of God in the person and redemption of Christ. It is produced by the Holy Spirit *taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to us*. It is, in its highest attainment on earth, exceedingly imperfect : how much more, in the lowest degree in which the grace of God can exist ? It is admiration and adoring love to the perfections of God ; mourning and hungering desires after the happiness to be found in him ; joy and delight and complacency in him ; gratitude for unspeakable benefits ; zeal for his glory. There must be an inward feeling and consciousness of these things, or some of them, where there is true love of God ; for an imperceptible love is nothing : yet, compared with the

object, and our obligations, our warmest feelings are cold, and we are apt to think them as nothing. Our most sensible and fervent affections are occasional, but they form the judgment ;¹ and, when we cannot reach them, we mourn, and cannot rest without them :

‘ ———they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.’

The medium through which they are excited, even faith, is different from sense : *this* meets us every where, but *that* must be sought by retirement, prayer, meditation, &c. Yet, at last, though all worship, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, must be form, nay hypocrisy, without some feeling of desire, love, gratitude, and zeal, the reality and vigour of the principle must be shown by its effects in producing unreserved, self-denying, disinterested obedience, and the disposition to count all God’s commandments right and good, to delight in them, and to count nothing *grievous*, but the *sin that dwelleth in us*, and hinders us from doing the things that we would.—Mr. Wilberforce has some good thoughts on the love of Christ, applicable to this subject.

I am not disposed to enter on the question, whether repentance and faith may be begun without any love to God, as it relates to the case of an individual ; for I am called to state truths, not

¹ Or, our settled judgment accords to them on this subject, though our *feelings* vary.

to decide on characters : but humiliation, and the simple receiving of Christ, must precede the *comfortable exercise* of love to God : yet nothing truly good can exist without the Spirit of Christ.—As I fear your reasoning turn of mind has kept you from this comfort, I have spoken more fully on that subject : but I will spare a little time for the discussion of this latter, if you think it will be useful.—My paper is full.

Your's affectionately,

THOS. SCOTT.

* * * This letter may be referred to page 250 ; but it was received too late for insertion in its place.

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